Shakespeare's Sonnets

DEDICATION

The dedication resembles a Roman inscription, in which capitalized words were separated by full stops, and in which main verbs were often delayed until the final line. Thorpe and Eld produced no other dedicatory epistle of similar appearance. The Latin dedication to Ben Jonson of Marston's *Malcontent* (1604), published by William Apsley, one of the tradesmen involved in the publication of Q, has a similar layout ('BENIAMINI IONSONIO | POETAE | ELEGANTISSIMO | GRAVISSIMO'), although without points between its words. Thorpe's close associate Edward Blount printed *Ben Jonson His Part of King James his Royall and Magnificent Entertainment* (1604), which includes a lengthy Latin dedicatory inscription to James and his son Prince Henry (sig. $D3^a$). This includes lapidary stops ('D.I.O.M. | BRITANNIARVM. IMP.' . . .). Katherine Duncan-Jones, 'Was the 1609 *Shake-Speare's Sonnets* Really Unauthorized?', *RES* NS 34 (1983), 151–71, has proposed the dedication to Jonson's *Volpone* (printed for Thorpe in 1605) as an analogue, although the absence of full stops and its use of three different sizes of type differentiates it from this dedication. The Latinate delay of the verb, however ('BEN. IONSON | THE GRATEFULL ACKNOWLEDGER | DEDICATES | BOTH IT, AND HIMSELFE.'), suggests that Thorpe and Eld were attempting to produce a dedicatory format which linked the Sonnets with the classical learning of Ben Jonson and his circle. The typographical form of the dedication makes a claim that the book that follows will be a learned work which confers eternal life on the people it is about, despite its careful reluctance to reveal who they are.

1 ONLIE.BEGETTER (a) sole originator; (b) sole procurer (of the manuscript). On these alternatives hangs a multiplicity of consequences and questions: if sense (a) the assumption is that the publication has the blessing and collaboration of Shakespeare (or that Thorpe was intimately acquainted with the genesis of the poems). If so, then is 'Mr W.H.' to be identified with the friend of Sonnets *1–126*? Or with a patron to whom the poems are flatteringly addressed as their sole creator? If (b) then the sonnets are assumed to have reached Thorpe through an intermediary, and hence the authority of the volume is called into question, and Mr W.H. loses any connection with the subjects of the sonnets. For a consideration of these questions, see the Introduction, pp. 98–103.

3 M^r.W.H. See Introduction, pp. 100–1. The initials may be used to generate excitingly multiple hypotheses about the identities of the persons referred to: cf. George Gascoigne's *A Hundred Sundry Flowers* (1573): 'F.I., whom the reader may name Freeman Jones, for the better understanding of the same' (sig. $A3^a$).

4 THAT.ETERNITIE the eternity referred to by the poet in e.g. *18*, *19*, *60*, *63*, *101*.

10 ADVENTVRER Thomas Thorpe, as publisher of the volume, put up the capital for paper required to produce the book, and did so with no guarantee of return. He was therefore like a merchant adventurer (*OED* 4, 'One who undertakes, or shares in, commercial adventures or enterprises', citing this as the first usage). Precedent for the comparison between publisher and merchant who 'adventures' can be found in the prefatory matter to Gascoigne's *A Hundred Sundry Flowers* (1573), 201 ('This I have adventured, for thy contentation (learned reader)') and 204.

11–12 SETTING. | FORTH Printing (*OED* s.v. 'set' 144e); also continuing the image of merchant adventurers via 144b(a), 'To send out (soldiers, etc.) for service; hence, to equip, fit out (men, a fleet, a voyage)'. The phrase was relatively common in preliminary matter.

14 T.T. Thomas Thorpe, who usually signed his name in prefatory material either 'T. Th.' or 'Th. Th.'. He is the subject of the verb 'wisheth'. Some have suggested that he could also be its object with Mr W.H. its subject. This is unlikely, since the piece is clearly a publisher's dedication, and Thorpe is cited as the publisher on the title-page.

TO.THE.ONLIE.BEGETTER.OF.
THESE.INSVING.SONNETS.
Mr.W.H. ALL.HAPPINESSE.
AND.THAT.ETERNITIE.
PROMISED.
BY.
OVR.EVER-LIVING.POET.
WISHETH.
THE.WELL-WISHING.
ADVENTVRER.IN.
SETTING.
FORTH.

T.T.

Sonnets 1–17 urge a young man to marry. They are frequently indebted to Erasmus's 'Epistle to persuade a young man to marriage' which Shakespeare probably read in Wilson, 39–63. The epistle makes analogies between having children, tilling the earth for cultivation, grafting old trees to ensure new stock, and perpetuating one's fame for posterity, all of which are elements in this mini-sequence. Relevant extracts are quoted in the notes.

1 **increase** 'The multiplication of a family or race of men or animals' (*OED* 2b), stressed on the second syllable. A faint play on the sense 'profit' (*OED* 4) reminds us that this is a poem to a potential patron.

2 **That** so that
beauty's rose the prime of beauty; compare *Antony* 3.13.19–20: 'Tell him he wears the rose | Of youth upon him'. Q italicizes 'rose'. Southamptonites have claimed that Henry Wriothesley's name could be pronounced 'Rosely', and that a biographical allusion is meant. Q italicizes thirty-five words, of which seventeen are proper names; the rest appear to mark phrases which the compositor found unusual or difficult. The metaphor *beauty's rose* (the fragile vehicle of beauty) was probably enough to make compositor A reach for his italics.

3 **But as the riper** but while the older (roses)

4 **tender heir might bear** his gentle offspring might (a) carry his memory; (b) bear his resemblance. *Tender heir* may play on the false etymology which derived the Latin 'mulier' (woman) from 'mollis aer', meaning 'soft air' (for which, see *Cymbeline* 5.6.448–54, and *Lucrece* l. 1240 n.). The pun makes the generations mingle: a wife *bears* (gives birth to) a son at the same time as an *heir* reproduces his father's manner.

5 **contracted** (a) betrothed, affianced (*OED* 2, as in *1 Henry IV*, 4.2.15–18: 'I . . . enquire me out contracted bachelors, such as had been asked twice on the banns'); (b) 'shrunken' (*OED* 5a)

6 **Feed'st . . . fuel** The friend is accused of burning up the substance of his own life in an echo of Ovid's Narcissus, 'uror amore mei: flammas moveoque feroque' ('I am burned by love of myself: I produce and am consumed by flames', *Met.* 3.464).

6 **self-substantial** which derives from your own substance. *OED* cites only this example. It may hint at a play on 'substance' in the sense of 'family property' which the friend wastes on himself rather than leaving to an heir.

7 **Making . . . lies** Narcissus's cry 'inopem me copia fecit' ('my very abundance (of contact with what I love) makes me poor') was one of the most frequently quoted phrases from the *Met.* (3.466). Cf. *Venus* l. 19–20 n.

10 **only herald** chief forerunner. Like an early rose, the friend is presented as one who precedes the arrival of spring in its full panoply.

11 **content** (a) happiness (*OED n.* 2, 1); (b) that which you contain, the children who are hidden within you (*OED n.* 1, I). Stressed (as usually before the nineteenth century) on the second syllable.

12 **tender churl** *tender* ranges through 'soft' (used of plants, *OED* 3b), 'young' (*OED* 4), 'effeminate' (*OED* 3a), 'sensitive'. *Churl* connotes low social status; it can mean 'bondsman', and 'One who is sordid, "hard", or stingy in money-matters; a niggard' (*OED* 6). The conjunction of niggards and churls is also found in Coverdale's translation of Isaiah 32: 5: 'Then shall the niggard be no more called gentle, nor the churl liberal'. The phrase praises and wounds the aristocratic friend at once: although he is *tender* his lack of an heir is an ignoble meanness.
niggarding 'To act in a niggardly fashion' (*OED* 'niggard', *v.* 1. *intr.*, citing this as the first occurrence); also 'To put off *with* a small amount of something; to treat in a niggardly fashion' (*OED* 2) as in *Caesar* 4.2.281–2: 'Nature must obey necessity, | Which we will niggard with a little rest'.

14 **the world's due** what you owe to the world: children
by the grave and thee The *world's due* is destroyed once by his self-absorption, and once by death. Compare *Venus* ll. 757–60.

1

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the riper should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory:
But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thy self thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content,
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding:
  Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
  To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

0.1] MALONE; *unnumbered in* Q 2 rose] Q (*Rose*)

Seventeenth-century manuscripts preserve versions of this sonnet which may represent an early draft. See 'Spes Altera' printed here at the end of the sequence. The MS tradition is collated with the variant version.

1 **forty** is used to mean 'many', as in the biblical 'forty days and forty nights' (e.g. Genesis 7: 4)

2 **field** (a) plot of agricultural land (ploughed by time). The violent action of *besiege* suggests also (b) battlefield (*OED* 6a); the association with *livery* activates the sense (c) from heraldry 'The surface of an escutcheon or shield on which the "charge" is displayed' (*OED* 13a).

4 **tattered weed** (a) ragged garment (instead of fine *livery*); (b) drooping wild plant torn out of beauty's *field*. Q reads 'totter'd', a variant spelling of *tattered*, which is usually used of clothing, as in *1 Henry IV*, 4.2.34–5: 'a hundred and fifty tattered prodigals, lately come from swine-keeping'. MS versions read 'rotten weeds', lending support to (b), for which otherwise *tattered* would be an unusual epithet.

5–8 allude to the story of the prodigal son (Matthew 25: 24–30).

6 **lusty** (a) vigorous (*OED* 5); (b) sexually active, lustful (*OED* 4)

8 **all-eating** (a) all-consuming; (b) universally destructive, alluding back to *1*.14
thriftless 'wasteful, improvident, spendthrift' (*OED* 3). The word is used in *Richard II* 5.3.66–7 with a similar sense of intergenerational wastage: 'he shall spend mine honour with his shame; | As thriftless sons their scraping fathers' gold'.

9 **use** active deployment, with return; the negative associations of usury are muted here. On the Elizabethan law of usury, see 6.8 n.

10 '**This . . .** Q does not mark direct speech; contemporary readers might have included l. 12 in the speech, making *thine* into an address by an embarrassed son to his father (as in *1 Henry IV* 3.2.129–59, in which Prince Harry too speaks of the final reckoning up of an account), or, as Seymour-Smith suggests, to the world.

11 **sum my count** tot up my accounts
old excuse (a) the excuse I make when I am old; (b) the excuse I habitually make

12 **succession** 'according to the customary or legal principle by which one succeeds another in an inheritance, an office, etc. by inherited right' (*OED* 5b(a), citing this passage); also 'proving your son to be yours in perpetuity, rather than by gift or conquest'

14 **thy blood warm** Old people were believed to become cold and dry, while youths were believed to be hot and moist. The blood of a son was supposed to be the same as that of his father. Hence 'to see your own blood vigorously alive in your son'.

2

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery so gazed on now
Will be a tattered weed of small worth held:
Then, being asked where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days,
To say within thine own deep-sunken eyes
Were an all-eating shame, and thriftless praise.
How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use
If thou couldst answer 'This fair child of mine
Shall sum my count, and make my old excuse',
Proving his beauty by succession thine.
This were to be new made when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.

4 tattered] Q (totter'd); tattered JOHN's 9 deserved] Q; deserves JOHN's 10–11 answer 'This . . . excuse'] MALONE 1790 *italic* (*conj.* Capell); ~ ^ ~ ~ ^ Q; say that, this faire . . . excuse JOHN's 11 my old] Q; thy old JOHN's

1 **glass** mirror; often a source of admonition (as in the popular collection *A Mirror for Magistrates*, which warned those in high estate how best to govern) or as an emblem of vanity. Compare *Lucrece* ll. 1758–64.

2 **another** another face. Q reads 'an other', extending the sense to 'an other person, someone completely new'.

3 **fresh repair** (a) appearance of newness; (b) recently renovated state

4 **beguile** cheat (charmingly)
unbless some mother deprive a woman of motherhood. *Unbless* is the first cited usage in *OED*.

5 **uneared** unploughed, untilled. Ploughing also carries sexual overtones in *Antony* 2.2.233–4: 'She made great Caesar lay his sword to bed. | He ploughed her, and she cropped.'

6 **husbandry** 'tillage or cultivation of the soil' (*OED* 2); with a pun on a sense not recognized by *OED* of 'your being her husband'. The pun is also active in *Measure* 1.4.42–3: 'even so her plenteous womb | Expresseth his full tilth and husbandry', and in Louis Le Roy, *Of the Interchangeable Course or Variety of Things*, trans. R[obert] A[shley] (1594), 130^{v}: 'The husbandman hateth the fruitless ground, and the husband a wife that is barren.'

7 **fond** infatuated, foolish, silly

8 **posterity** the emergence of future generations. Cf. *Venus* ll. 757–60.

10 **Calls back** The expected sense 'recall, remember' is not cited in *OED* before 1850, although it must be in play here; the physical sense 'summons back into being' is, though, very strong. For the idea that a child is a mirror to its father see *Lucrece* ll. 1758–64. Compare Erasmus: 'Old age cometh upon us all, will we or nill we, and this way nature provided for us, that we should wax young again in our children . . . For what man can be grieved that he is old when he seeth his own countenance, which he had being a child, to appear lively in his son?' (Wilson, 56). Erasmus says little about mothers, however: the suggestion that the friend resembles his mother anticipates the androgyny of *20*.2.

10 **April** proverbially fresh (Dent A310)

11 **windows of thine age** aged eyes; eyes clouded with age. There may also be an allusion to lattice windows, criss-crossed with lead, as in *A Lover's Complaint* l. 14.

12 **Despite of wrinkles** *Batman upon Bartholomew* (1582), fos. 18^{v}–19^{r}, records that 'the sight of old men is not sharp, because their skins are rivelled [wrinkled]' which is a rough paraphrase of Aristotle: 'the reason why old people do not have keen vision is that the skin in the eyes, like that elsewhere, gets wrinkled and thicker with age' (*De Generatione Animalium* 780a, 31–3). The lines exploit an analogy between the wrinkled surface of an aged eye and the irregularity of Elizabethan glass.

13 **rememb'red** Q's spelling, 'remembred', embeds the word 'bred' in remembering.

14 **image** (a) physical appearance (as reflected in a mirror); (b) embodiment (such as a child)

3

Look in thy glass and tell the face thou viewest
Now is the time that face should form another,
Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest
Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother.
For where is she so fair whose uneared womb
Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
Of his self-love to stop posterity?
Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime;
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time.
But if thou live rememb'red not to be,
Die single, and thine image dies with thee.

1 **Unthrifty** (a) improvident, prodigal; (b) unprofitable. An archaic sense, 'unchaste, wanton, profligate' (*OED* 3), may be in play. *Spend* can mean 'ejaculate', and *Spend* | *Upon thyself* suggests masturbation. *Unthrifty loveliness* begins a string of oxymorons which dominate the poem (*beauteous niggard*, *profitless usurer*).

4 **frank** 'not in serfdom or slavery' (*OED* 1)

5 **niggard** miser

7 **Profitless . . . use** A moneylender who makes no profit, the friend uses up nature's loan rather than using it to generate interest (or children).

8 **sum of sums** total made up of the sum of lesser sums, pointing back to the debt to nature of *2*.11

9 **traffic** (a) 'bargaining; trade' (*OED* 2a); (b) 'Sexual commerce; (sexual) intercourse' (Partridge), which revives the suggestions of masturbation from the poem's opening.

12 **acceptable** is stressed on the first syllable. **audit** final reckoning (an image brought back at *126*.11). Underlying the whole sonnet is a preoccupation with preserving noble household, its wealth, material structures, and bloodlines. Here the friend is implicitly compared to a steward called upon to give an account of the wealth of a household, or an executor required to sum up the assets of a deceased person. Failure to provide an *acceptable audit* in this period could result in imprisonment (Sokol, 17).

13 **unused** not put out to loan for profit. See *6*.8 n.

14 **executor** 'A person appointed by a testator to execute or carry into effect his will after his decease' (*OED* 3); in this case a son.

4

Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend
Upon thyself thy beauty's legacy?
Nature's bequest gives nothing, but doth lend,
And being frank she lends to those are free:
Then, beauteous niggard, why dost thou abuse
The bounteous largess given thee to give?
Profitless usurer, why dost thou use
So great a sum of sums yet canst not live?
For having traffic with thyself alone
Thou of thyself thy sweet self dost deceive.
Then how, when nature calls thee to be gone,
What acceptable audit canst thou leave?
  Thy unused beauty must be tombed with thee,
  Which usèd lives th' executor to be.

12 audit] Q (*Audit*)

1 **hours** two syllables (Q reads 'howers')
frame make, construct (a building). The noun is often used in the period to describe the human body. Cf. *Venus* ll. 729–31.
2 **dwell** linger (also perhaps 'live in', since *frame* can mean 'to construct a building')
4 **un-fair** 'To deprive of fairness or beauty.' *OED* cites only this example of the transitive verb; the verbal innovation makes shocking the suddenness with which the gentle hours turn into destructive tyrants.
5 **Time** Q is sporadic in capitalizing personifications, capitalizing *Summer* but not *time*. These irregularities are almost certainly compositorial rather than authorial. This edition capitalizes nouns when it clarifies the outlines of a personification allegory. Q's irregularity in this respect does indicate, however, that barriers between outright personifications and what are simply rather energetic nouns were not clearly marked in early modern printed texts.
leads . . . on Initially Time appears to be leading a dance of the hours, until the sinister associations of to *lead on* emerge: 'to entice or beguile into going to greater lengths' (*OED* s.v. 'lead' 20a).
6 **confounds** defeats utterly
7 **checked** stopped up. Also used to describe the death of plants at *15*.6.
8 **o'ersnowed** is used by Shakespeare only here.
bareness blank leaflessness; as in *97*.4. 'Barrenness' may also be implicit in Q's 'barenes'.
9 **distillation** the product of distillation (*OED* 4b), hence rose or other scent. *OED* shows Shakespeare's usage here (and in *Merry Wives* 3.5.104: 'And then, to be stopped in, like a strong distillation') to be unusual: the word more often refers to the process rather than its outcome.
10 **liquid prisoner** The constraint of perfume into a bottle qualifies the attractions of immortality.
11 **Beauty's . . . bereft** The beautiful scent which is the chief effect of beauty would die with the petals of the rose. *With* means 'at the same time as' but also almost suggests that beauty is the means by which *beauty's effects* are destroyed.
12 **Nor it . . . was** leaving us with neither beauty nor any means of recalling it. The poem excels at evoking bareness: here *it* could refer back to *beauty's effect* as well as to *beauty*, depriving us of all.
14 **Lose** Q reads 'Leese', a regular variant form of 'lose' in the seventeenth century, although it occurs in Shakespeare only here. Q's spelling may suggest the impermanence of 'lease' (anticipating *13*.5) and the dregs or deposits left behind by distillation ('lees').
substance Primarily 'essential character', but given the concern of these sonnets with the preservation of an estate 'Possessions, goods, estate' (*OED* 16a) may also be in play. Opposition between *show* and *substance* was proverbial (Dent S408).
still echoes *distilled*, and gains additional permanence from the echo.

5

Those hours, that with gentle work did frame
The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell,
Will play the tyrants to the very same,
And that un-fair which fairly doth excel:
For never-resting Time leads summer on
To hideous winter, and confounds him there,
Sap checked with frost and lusty leaves quite gone,
Beauty o'er-snowed and bareness everywhere.
Then, were not summer's distillation left
A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
Nor it nor no remembrance what it was.
But flowers distilled, though they with winter meet,
Lose but their show; their substance still lives sweet.

8 bareness] Q (barenes); barenesse BENSON; Barrenness GILDON 14 Lose] Q (Leese)

1 **ragged hand** In sixteenth-century usage usually 'rough', hence 'savage', rather than 'tattered'. The usage may be underwritten by a personification of Winter jagged with frost, hence 'having a broken jagged outline or surface' (*OED* 2). *Hand* can mean 'handwriting'; here winter may be marking the features of the friend with rough lines. Cf. the usage in E.C.'s *Emaricdulfe* (1595) 22.9: 'Smile on these rough-hewed lines, these ragged words'.
deface (a) 'To mar the face, features, or appearance of' (*OED* 1); (b) 'To blot out, obliterate, efface (writing, marks)' (*OED* 3).

3 **vial** a container for perfume; hence a woman

5–6 **That use . . . loan** that practice of lending money out for interest is not forbidden where those who pay the loan happily consent to it. *Happies* is the *OED*'s first cited usage of 'happy' as a transitive verb.

7 **That's for . . . thee** glosses the previous line: that is, when you, for your own benefit, have a child who resembles you.

8 **ten for one** ten children in exchange for you, who are only one. The maximum legal rate of interest according to the statutes 13 Eliz. cap. 8 and 39 Eliz. cap. 18 was 10 per cent; childbirth here becomes an exercise in venture capital.

10 **refigured** re-embodied; perhaps 'remultiplied' (although this stretches the recorded senses). The multiplication of ten by ten occurs, inevitably, in the tenth line.

12 **posterity** By about 1600 this word was acquiring its modern sense, 'All succeeding generations (collectively)' (*OED* 2b). The revised version of Drayton's *Idea* (1619) 17.9 responds to this usage: 'posteritie' is used to replace 'after-worlds' from the version of 1594.

13 **self-willed** (a) obstinate; (b) self-obsessed; with possibly a pun on 'bequeathed to yourself' (as in will and testament). Q's 'selfe-wild' may suggest 'do not be savage to yourself', although see *17*.2 n.

14 **conquest** (a) something overcome by death; (b) 'property acquired other than by inheritance' (*OED* 6a), a sense which interacts with *self-willed* and *heir*. In early modern England property could be held by inheritance, by gift, or else by 'conquest', a category used to cover many other means of acquiring property.

6

Then let not winter's ragged hand deface
In thee thy summer ere thou be distilled:
Make sweet some vial; treasure thou some place
With beauty's treasure ere it be self-killed:
That use is not forbidden usury
Which happies those that pay the willing loan;
That's for thyself to breed another thee,
Or ten times happier be it ten for one:
Ten times thyself were happier than thou art,
If ten of thine ten times refigured thee.
Then what could death do if thou shouldst depart,
Leaving thee living in posterity?
  Be not self-willed, for thou art much too fair
  To be death's conquest and make worms thine heir.

1 ragged] Q (wragged) 4 beauty's] GILDON 1714; beautits Q; beauties BENSON 13 self-willed] Q (self-wild)

This sonnet echoes elements in *Met.* 15.184–227, probably via Golding 15.243–51: 'The child new-born lies void of strength. Within a season though | He waxing four-footed learns like savage beasts to go. | Then somewhat faltering, and as yet not firm of foot, he stands | By getting somewhat for to help his sinews in his hands. | From that time growing strong and swift, he passeth forth the space | Of youth: and also wearing out his middle age apace, | Through drooping age's steepy path he runneth out his race. | This age doth undermine the strength of former years, and throws | It down.'

2 **under-eye** (a) inferior eye (person); (b) mortal eye, i.e. 'creature which lives beneath the sun'

3 **homage** 'In *Feudal Law*, Formal and public acknowledgement of allegiance, wherein a tenant or vassal declared himself the man of the king or the lord of whom he held, and bound himself to his service' (*OED* 1); hence reinforcing *under-eye* (a).

5 **having** refers to the sun rather than to the worshippers beneath him. For a moment the activities of the sun subside into the past tense, before they are revived into the vigour of the present by their continuing appeal to *mortal looks* in l. 7.
steep-up precipitous

6 **Resembling . . . age** like a fit youth at the peak of his prime. The sonnet appears to use a tripartite division of the ages of man, which are related to the stages of the sun's course. In such schemes *youth* (corresponding to the Latin *iuventus*) can include men as old as 49. *Middle age* is more likely to mean that the youth is in his prime or central age than that he is approaching his decline, since by 1600 middle age had not acquired its current associations with ageing corpulence. See J. A. Burrow, *The Ages of Man: A Study in Medieval Writing and Thought* (Oxford, 1986), 57. The phrase could be used of an older generation by a younger in Shakespeare, however: in *Winter's Tale* 4.4.106–8 Perdita says to the disguised Polixenes: 'These are flowers | Of middle summer, and I think they are given | To men of middle age'; she clearly means to distinguish herself from his generation. *Yet* in l. 7 augments the uncertainty: it means primarily 'even now', but its possible concessive sense ('despite this') suggests that having reached the top of the hill the friend is just about to decline: as these various senses come into play the sun slips from prime to decline before one's eyes.

8 **Attending on** (a) watching; (b) attending like servants

9 **highmost pitch** utmost peak
car chariot. *OED* 1b: 'From 16th to 19th c. chiefly poetic, with associations of dignity, solemnity, or splendour; applied also to the fabled chariot of Phaëthon or the sun'.

11 **fore** before. The form is a recognized variant of 'before', although even in the sixteenth century it was sometimes printed ''fore'.
converted turned away. Cf. *Timon* 1.2.141: 'Men shut their doors against a setting sun' and Dent (S979) 'The rising, not the setting, sun is worshipped by most men'.

12 **tract** course. In this context it may also evoke a variety of limited temporal or physical extents: 'A stretch or extent of territory' (*OED* 3a); 'The drawing out . . . or lapse of time' (*OED n.*[3] I.1a); also 3b, 'Protraction (of time), deferring, putting off, dilatory proceeding, delay', and 3c, 'A space or extent of time'.

13 **outgoing** To 'go out' can mean 'to die', hence 'reaching your end during what should be your prime'. Also 'outstripping yourself'. The suggestion is that the friend is burning himself out.

14 **get a son** beget a son. The word 'sun' is not used in this poem; the pressure to name *the gracious light* is only released by the pun on 'son'.

7

Lo in the orient when the gracious light
Lifts up his burning head, each under-eye
Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,
Serving with looks his sacred majesty;
And having climbed the steep-up heavenly hill,
Resembling strong youth in his middle age,
Yet mortal looks adore his beauty still,
Attending on his golden pilgrimage:
But when from highmost pitch, with weary car,
Like feeble age he reeleth from the day,
The eyes (fore duteous) now converted are
From his low tract and look another way:
So thou, thyself outgoing in thy noon,
Unlooked on diest unless thou get a son.

1 **Music to hear** (a) when there is music to hear; (b) you, who are music to listen to

2 **Sweets** BL Add. MS 15226, which is divided into stanzas as though for a song setting, reads 'Sweet', a vocative which Kerrigan suggests might be authorial (443), but which is more likely to be the result of misreading a scribal abbreviation for terminal 'es'.

3–4 **Why lov'st . . . annoy** Why do you love that which you listen to without any sign of joy—or are you glad to hear things which make you sad? The paradox of enjoying the sadness of music is a commonplace of the period, from Jacques's 'I can suck melancholy out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs' (*As You Like It* 2.5.11–12) to John Dowland's motto *Semper Dowland semper dolens* ('always Dowland always doleful').

4 **receiv'st** 'to attend, listen, or give heed to' (*OED* 1d)

5 **true concord** perfect harmony (also thought to reflect the harmonies of the heavens and of the state)

6 **unions married** refers to the harmonies of a polyphonic setting of a song. *Union* is also used by Shakespeare to mean 'marriage' (*OED* 5) in *K. John* 2.1.447–8: 'This union shall do more than battery can | To our fast-closèd gates'.

7 **sweetly chide thee** mellifluously rebuke you

7–8 **confounds | In singleness** destroys (a) by being a bachelor; (b) by refusing to blend your voice into the harmony

8 **parts . . . bear** (a) lines of the song which you should sing; (b) personal attributes which you should reproduce; (c) roles (in a family) which you should play

9–10 **Mark how . . . ordering** The metaphor probably refers to a lute in which strings are tuned in unison (*by mutual ordering*) in order to enable them to resonate in sympathy with each other. *Strike* is the verb regularly used to mean 'pluck the strings of a lute'; its extension to mean 'resonate, or cause to sound' is warranted by *OED* 30b, 'To produce (music, a sound, note) by touching a string or playing upon an instrument'.

11 **sire** father

14 '**Thou . . . none**' unmarried you shall amount to nothing (Q does not use quotation marks). *Prove* means 'turn out to be' (*OED* 8). The line alludes to the proverb 'One is no number' (Dent O54, and see *136*.8 n.), which has its origins in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 1088a, 6. Marlowe's Leander uses the proverb as part of his persuasion of Hero (*Hero and Leander* l. 255); shortly before, in ll. 229–30, he uses an argument from harmony: 'Like untuned strings all women are, | Which long time lie untouched will harshly jar'. This suggests that the whole passage was running through Shakespeare's memory.

8

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy:
Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,
Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?
If the true concord of well-tunèd sounds
By unions married do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering;
Resembling sire, and child, and happy mother,
Who all in one, one pleasing note do sing:
  Whose speechless song being many, seeming one,
  Sings this to thee, 'Thou single wilt prove none.'

Title in BL2 reads: 'In laudem musice et opprobrium contemptoris eiusdem' 2 Sweets] Q; Sweete BL2 6 thine] Q; thy BL2 8 the parts that] Q; a parte, which BL2 10 in] Q; on BL2 11 sire, and child] Q; Childe, and Syer BL2 12 Who] Q; which BL2 one pleasing note do] Q; this single note dothe BL2 14 'Thou . . . none.'] MALONE; ^~ . . . ~.^ Q wilt] Q; shalt BL2

3 **issueless** childless
hap chance
4 **makeless** 'Mateless; wifeless, husbandless, widowed' (*OED* 2)
6 **form** both the non-technical 'appearance', 'likeness', and possibly also 'In the Scholastic philosophy: The essential determinant principle of a thing . . . the essential creative quality' (*OED* 4a)
7 **private** particular; possibly 'deprived, bereft, dispossessed' (*OED* 'private', *ppl. a.*, for which no instance is cited after 1573)
8 **By** by means of
9–10 **unthrift** 'a spendthrift, prodigal' (*OED* 3). The sense is 'whatever a prodigal spends in the world is simply redistributed to a new owner (*his* functions as a neuter pronoun); but the beautiful man completely destroys the beauty which he wastes'.
12 **unused . . . it** if it is not put out to usury the person who wastes it (*user*) also destroys it
14 **murd'rous shame** shameful murder (with a suggestion of auto-eroticism)

9

Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye
That thou consum'st thyself in single life?
Ah, if thou issueless shalt hap to die
The world will wail thee like a makeless wife.
The world will be thy widow and still weep
That thou no form of thee hast left behind,
When every private widow well may keep,
By children's eyes, her husband's shape in mind.
Look what an unthrift in the world doth spend
Shifts but his place, for still the world enjoys it;
But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,
And kept unused the user so destroys it:
    No love toward others in that bosom sits
    That on himself such murd'rous shame commits.

1 **For shame** (a) Shame on you! (b) out of a sense of shame. Q has no punctuation after this phrase, although editors often add an exclamation mark.

3 **Grant, if thou wilt** accept (if you must) that. . . .

6 **stick'st** hesitate or scruple (*OED* 15)

7–8 **Seeking . . . desire** The *roof* is the body, but also the literal roof over his family's heads. Compare Erasmus's letter on marriage: 'it lieth in your hands to keep that house from decay, whereof [you are] lineally descended' (Wilson, 51). The poet's voice here becomes almost that of an aged family counsellor rebuking a friend for destroying the fabric of his household.

9 **O . . . mind** O change your attitudes (to reproduction), so that I can revise what I think of you. This is the first time the first-person pronoun occurs in the sequence.

10 **Shall hate . . . love?** The friend's *hate* is implicit in his refusal to have a child; his *beauteous roof* asks for a gentler inhabitant to suit it.

11 **kind** willing to acknowledge the emotional ties of kinship

13 **Make thee another self** have a child; perhaps also 'transform your moral character'

love of me This is the first suggestion of a personal relationship between poet and addressee.

14 **thine** both the possessive form of 'thy', and 'Those who are thine; thy people, family, or kindred' (*OED* 5b)

10

For shame deny that thou bear'st love to any,
Who for thyself art so unprovident.
Grant, if thou wilt, thou art beloved of many,
But that thou none lov'st is most evident:
For thou art so possessed with murd'rous hate
That 'gainst thyself thou stick'st not to conspire,
Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate,
Which to repair should be thy chief desire.
O, change thy thought, that I may change my mind:
Shall hate be fairer lodged than gentle love?
Be as thy presence is, gracious and kind,
Or to thyself at least kind-hearted prove:
  Make thee another self for love of me,
  That beauty still may live in thine or thee.

1–2 'For all that you diminish yourself by sexual reproduction, by an equal amount you will grow again in your child.' *Departest* must mean 'give up', as in the phrase 'depart with', *OED* 12b: 'To part with; to give up, surrender', as in *K. John* 2.1.563–4: 'John . . . Hath willingly departed with a part'. Sexual intercourse was believed to shorten a man's life.

2, 4 **thine** As in *10.14* the play on 'thine' as the possessive form of 'thy', and 'Those who are thine; thy people, family, or kindred' (*OED* 5b) enables Shakespeare to suggest that a loss of what is the friend's property—his semen—remains his in the form of his future kin. So 'the blood of yours which you expend as semen you may still call yours, and yours in a richer, familial sense, when it produces your children'.

3 **youngly** (a) 'early in life' (*OED* 1); (b) with youthful vigour

4 **when . . . convertest** when you have left youth behind

5 **Herein** if you follow this course

6 **Without this** if you do not follow this course

7 **so** as you are

8 **threescore . . . away** i.e. everyone would die within a single generation. The same argument is used in Wilson, 60.

9 **store** resources for the future, with perhaps an agricultural flavour via *OED* 2, 'Live stock' (as kept for breeding)

11 **Look whom . . . more** Nature gives more (including more offspring) to those who are already well endowed with qualities. *The* does not need to be emended to *thee*, as it is in many editions, following Sewell. The proposition is a general one which includes the friend in its compass.

13 **seal** the stamp with which she seals documents

14 **copy** 'The original writing, work of art, etc. from which a copy is made' (*OED* 8a). *Copy* derives from the Latin *copia*, fullness or abundance, a sense (*OED* 1a) which was common in the sixteenth century, which would here allude back to Nature's *bounty*, and give an organic strength to the mechanical process of reproduction.

11

As fast as thou shalt wane, so fast thou grow'st
In one of thine, from that which thou departest,
And that fresh blood which youngly thou bestow'st
Thou mayst call thine, when thou from youth convertest.
Herein lives wisdom, beauty, and increase;
Without this, folly, age, and cold decay.
If all were minded so the times should cease,
And threescore year would make the world away.
Let those whom Nature hath not made for store,
Harsh, featureless, and rude, barrenly perish.
Look whom she best endowed she gave the more,
Which bounteous gift thou shouldst in bounty cherish.
She carved thee for her seal, and meant thereby
Thou shouldst print more, not let that copy die.

8 year] Q; yeares BENSON 11 the] Q; thee SEWELL

1 **count** 'count the strokes of the clock'. The twelve hours in the day figure strongly in this twelfth sonnet.

2 **brave** fine, splendid, beautiful (Schmidt, 3). Most usages of the word in the Sonnets associate it with courageous resistance to insurmountable forces (as at *12*.14, *15*.8).

3 **past prime** (a) past its best; (b) when spring is over (*OED* 7; cf. *97*.7)

4 **all silvered o'er** Q reads 'or silver'd ore with white', a reading Rollins defends: ' "or" can be the heraldic term for gold, which is here conceived as being covered over with silver'. This ingenious defence of Q is hard to reconcile with the fact that Shakespeare says the curls were *sable* (black) to begin with, not gold. Malone's 'all silvered o'er' is, as Sisson notes, i.209–10, suspiciously alike 'all girded up' (l. 7). Stanley Wells, 'New Readings in Shakespeare's Sonnets', in J. P. Vander Motten, ed., *Elizabethan and Modern Studies* (Ghent, 1985), 319–20, suggests 'ensilvered', which requires only a misreading of two letters, an error of the kind which occurs several times in the passage attributed to Shakespeare in *Sir Thomas More*. 'Ensilvered' is, however, not cited by *OED* after 1382. Malone's emendation remains the most plausible.

5 **barren** Unusual in the sense of 'bare of leaves'; its usual sense 'bare of fruit' recalls the chill landscape of infertility, the *bareness everywhere* of 5.8.

6 **canopy** *OED*'s first cited usage as a verb, 'To cover with, or as with, a canopy'
herd flock

7 **girded up** 'To surround as with a belt; to tie firmly or confine' (*OED* 5 *transf.* and *fig.* a; first cited usage)

8 **bier** in earliest uses 'A framework for carrying; a handbarrow; a litter, a stretcher' (*OED* 1), with also the more usual sense of 'The movable stand on which a corpse, whether in a coffin or not, is placed before burial' (*OED* 2). The combination of senses turns harvest into a funeral, as the friend turns opportunities for reproduction into self-love.

9 **do I question make** speculate about

10 **among the wastes of time must go** is a phrase so rich in its evocation of empty destruction that it defies glossing: (a) you must be counted among the things ruined by time; (b) you must travel in the regions devastated by time (*OED* 3, citing the 1611 Bible, Isaiah 61: 4: 'They shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations'); (c) you must mingle with the trifles that squander time pointlessly (with a chiming reminiscence of the admonitory clock in *Twelfth Night* 3.1.129: '*Clock strikes.* The clock upbraids me with the waste of time.')

11 **sweets and beauties** Vendler notes that sweetness in the Sonnets tends to connote permanent inner virtue, while beauty is frequently presented as fragile and external.
do themselves forsake change, leave their beauty and sweetness behind

13 **Time's scythe** Time is given a scythe and often an hourglass in Renaissance emblem books.

14 **breed** offspring. *Breed* is a noun, but there is just a hint of a desperate imperative.
brave challenge, defy (*OED* 1). The verb carries over some of the despairingly vain resistance of the *brave day* from l. 2.

12

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls all silvered o'er with white;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard:
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go,
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake,
And die as fast as they see others grow,
  And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence
  Save breed to brave him when he takes thee hence.

4 all silvered o'er] MALONE; or siluer'd ore Q; are silver'd o'er GILDON 1714; o'er-silver'd all *conj*. Verity; ensilvered o'er OXFORD (*conj.* Wells); o'er-silvered are *conj*. G. B. Evans

1 **yourself** Q always prints 'yourself' as two words. Here Q's spelling seems emphatic: 'your true self, existing beyond the constraints of time'. This is the first sonnet to address the friend as 'you' rather than 'thou'. The shift may mark an increase in intimacy: 'you' is the normal form of address between educated Elizabethans, and by the mid-1590s 'thou' might seem poetic. Euphony plays its part in the shift, too (try reading the poem aloud with *thou* substituted for *you*).

love 'This poem marks the momentous instant in which the speaker first uses vocatives of love' (Vendler).

1–2 **but . . . live** But you cannot outlive your short time on earth. *No longer yours* implies temporary ownership over the mansion of the body, anticipating the short leasehold over beauty described in ll. 5–6.

3 **this coming end** death, which is just about to occur

5 **lease** To hold in *lease* is to enjoy the temporary possession and use of something for a fixed period. In Shakespeare this usually connotes impermanence.

6 **determination** is the technical legal word for the expiry of a lease, which might terminate on the death of the last male heir: 'the cessation of an estate or interest of any kind' (*OED* 1b). '*Law*. (esp. in *Conveyancing*)').

7 **Yourself** Q reads 'You selfe'. See note on l. 1 above.

8 **sweet issue . . . bear** (a) dear children should resemble your form; (b) dear children would bear children which resembled you. On *form* see 9.6 n.

9 **house** On the importance of sustaining the fabric and lifeblood of a noble house, see *10*.7–8 n. Here a well-managed house is figured initially as a literal protection from the *stormy gusts* of l. 11, and then grows to become a dynastic unit which offers protection against the *barren rage of death's eternal cold*, l. 12.

12 **barren rage** destructive anger which robs the world of fertility. *Rage* can also mean 'sexual desire'. *Barren* has gradually accumulated the sinister weight it carries here from the faint trace of the word in Q's 'barenes' in 5.8, through *11*.10 and *12*.5.

13 **unthrifts** See 9.9 and n. Q punctuates: 'O none but unthrifts, deare my love you know, | You had a Father, let your Son say so'. This admits two possible interpretations: (a) 'O none but spendthrifts allow the decay of so fair a mansion. Dear my love you know you had a father: let your son say so too'; (b) 'You know that none but the spendthrift allows the decay of so fair a mansion. You had a father: make a son who can say so too.' The punctuation in this edition follows the latter on the grounds that the former is too commonplace a thought to warrant the strenuous enjambment required to make it possible. It also cuts across the idiom of the period: Justice Shallow says 'To her, coz! Oh boy, thou hadst a father!' (*Merry Wives* 3.4.35–6) when he is urging Slender to woo Anne Page. The set phrase for egging on young men to woo, 'You had a father', is broken if Q's comma is not hardened.

13

O that you were yourself; but, love, you are
No longer yours than you yourself here live.
Against this coming end you should prepare,
And your sweet semblance to some other give.
So should that beauty which you hold in lease
Find no determination; then you were
Yourself again after your self's decease,
When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear.
Who lets so fair a house fall to decay,
Which husbandry in honour might uphold
Against the stormy gusts of winter's day
And barren rage of death's eternal cold?
O none but unthrifts, dear my love, you know:
You had a father, let your son say so.

7 Yourself] BENSON; You selfe] Q 13 unthrifts,] Q; unthrifts: GILDON 1714; unthrifts! KERRIGAN know:] INGRAM AND REDPATH; know, Q; know GILDON 1714; know. BOSWELL

2 **methinks** it seems to me
astronomy knowledge of how the stars influence human affairs; astrology

4 **Of plagues . . . quality** There was an insatiable appetite in the period for books which professed to predict the weather or the progress of disease. The popular handbook *The Calendar of Shepherds* offered pages of predictions of this kind.

5 **Nor can . . . tell** 'nor am I able to enumerate the minute particularities of future events'

6 **Pointing** The usual gloss is 'appointing', although this would imply a belief that a star-gazer could control rather than merely predict the future; hence one might prefer *OED* 'point' 2: 'To mark with, or indicate by, pricks or dots; to jot down, note, write, describe', which fits the imagery of minute cataloguing established by *tell*.

8 **predict** prediction. *OED* cites only this example. So: 'by frequent predictions which I find in the stars'.

10 **constant stars** unmoving guides; morally reliable beauties. Compare Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* 26.14, in which the poet opposes the scepticism of others about astrology by claiming that he is influenced 'By only those two stars in Stella's face'.

11 **As** i.e. as the proposition that

12 **If from . . . convert** provided that you shall turn away from your preoccupation with yourself in order to breed. On *store* see *11*.9 n.

14 **doom** 'Final fate, destruction, ruin, death' (*OED* 4b)
date 'The limit, term, or end of a period of time, or of the duration of something' (*OED* 5)

14

Not from the stars do I my judgement pluck,
And yet methinks I have astronomy,
But not to tell of good or evil luck,
Of plagues, of dearths, or seasons' quality;
Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell,
Pointing to each his thunder, rain, and wind,
Or say with princes if it shall go well
By oft predict that I in heaven find.
But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,
And, constant stars, in them I read such art
As truth and beauty shall together thrive
If from thyself to store thou wouldst convert:
  Or else of thee this I prognosticate,
  Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date.

5 minutes] Q (mynuits) 6 Pointing] Q; 'Pointing *conj.* Walker 8 oft] Q; aught DUNCAN-JONES; ought GILDON 1714

1–9 **When . . . When . . . Then** The meditative structure of the sonnet, moving inevitably from general observation to the particular case of the friend, closely parallels that of *12*, but it broadens outwards from the violets and trees of the earlier poem to absorb the astronomical breadth of *14*.

1 **consider** initially 'look at', but by l. 2 'consider that'. As Kerrigan finely puts it, 'the great sweep of the first line records the grandeur of a world suddenly shown to be vulnerable at the turn into line 2'.

3 **this huge stage . . . shows** 'All the world's a stage' (*As You Like It* 2.7.139) was a Renaissance commonplace (Dent W882) deriving ultimately, via scores of intermediaries, from John of Salisbury to Palingenius, from Lucian. *Totus mundus agit histrionem* ('all the world plays the actor') may have been the motto of Shakespeare's Globe theatre.

4 **influence** 'The supposed flowing or streaming from the stars or heavens of an etherial fluid acting upon the character and destiny of men' (*OED* 2a *spec.* in *Astrol.*)

comment Schmidt's gloss 'to discourse, reason' is too bland. The stars are a critically learned audience which 'make comments or remarks (*on*, *upon*). (Often implying unfavourable remarks)' (*OED* 4a). This sense continues the metaphor of the *stage* from l. 3. Also perhaps 'make remarks deriving from arcane wisdom', as in *Two Gentlemen* 2.1.38–40: 'not an eye that sees you but is a physician to comment on your malady'.

6 **Cheerèd** encouraged. The sense 'To salute with "cheers" or shouts of applause' (*OED* 8) is not found before the late eighteenth century, although the metaphor of stars as audience may indicate that this sense is struggling to emerge.

checked Cf. 5.7 n.

7 **Vaunt** 'To boast or brag; to use boastful, bragging, or vainglorious language. Fairly common *c.*1600' (*OED* 1 *intr.*)

8 **wear . . . memory** The young men wear out their proud clothes, their elevated status, and their exhilarated condition all at once, and wear them out to the point that they are erased from memory.

9 **conceit . . . stay** 'then the perception of this continual change . . .'. *Conceit* also suggests that the fashionable vitality described above is 'absurdly far-fetched'. *Stay* is used in *OED* sense 6c: 'Continuance in a state, duration'. The phrase *unconstant stay* is deliberately unsettling, since 'stay' is more usually employed *c.*1600 to describe a state of stability or a place of rest.

10 **rich in youth** full of youth and enriched by youth. The echo of *you* in *youth* plangently records a desire that the relationship between the two be intrinsic rather than transient: 'you-th is you-ness in this adoring pun' (Vendler). It suggests too that Shakespeare could switch between 'thou' and 'you' in order to pun.

11 **time . . . decay** Time and Decay either discuss how they can best together bring youth to an end, or they haggle over who should be the agent of the friend's destruction. *Debateth* may carry the sense, slightly archaic by 1609, of 'fight with'. See *Lucrece* l. 1421 n.

12 **sullied** 'Soiled, polluted (*lit.* and *fig.*); made gloomy or dull' (*OED*, citing this passage)

13 **in war** is a standard but less common alternative for 'at war'. It is chosen here because it is so pointedly not '*in* love'.

14 **engraft** I renovate and eternize you through poetry. To *engraft* is 'to insert (a scion of one tree) as a graft *into* or *upon* (another)' (*OED* 1) in order to renovate it, 'even as a young graff [grafted shoot] buddeth out when the old tree is cut down' (Wilson, 56). The metaphor suggests that the friend provides slips (or small shoots) which are then inserted into the bark of an established tree in order to create further living examples of the parent plant. The poet is the skilled artist who accomplishes this. Cf. 'You see, sweet maid, we marry | A gentler scion to the wildest stock, | And make conceive a bark of baser kind | By bud of nobler race' (*Winter's Tale* 4.4.92–5). There may also be a pun on 'graphein', the Greek verb to write. This is the first hint in the sequence that writing can immortalize even someone who is reluctant to eternize himself by having children.

15

When I consider every thing that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment;
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows,
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;
When I perceive that men as plants increase,
Cheerèd and checked even by the selfsame sky,
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
And wear their brave state out of memory;
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,
Where wasteful time debateth with decay
To change your day of youth to sullied night,
And, all in war with Time for love of you,
As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

1 **But wherefore** but why (abruptly continuing the argument of *15*)

3 **fortify** make yourself strong; perhaps, 'build ramparts against Time'

4 **blessèd** continues the association between childbearing and happy good fortune established by *unbless* (*3*.4).
barren rhyme is the first explicit mention of poetry in the sequence. It shockingly denies the vitality implicitly granted to verse by *engraft* in *15*.14, and links poetry with one of the most negatively charged adjectives in the early part of the sequence (see *13*.12 n.)

5 **top** zenith

6 **unset** 'Not furnished with plants', *OED* 5c, citing only this example, in which Shakespeare has extended sense 5b, 'Not planted, self-seeded', to mean 'not yet subjected to human husbandry', hence 'unmarried women'.

7 **With virtuous . . . flowers** who chastely desire to bear your children. The comparison of a bride to a garden is a Renaissance commonplace, deriving ultimately from the Song of Solomon 4: 12: 'My sister my spouse is as a garden inclosed, as a spring shut up, and a fountain sealed up'.

8 **Much liker** more similar to you
counterfeit is possible in the neutral sense 'An imitation or representation in painting, sculpture, etc.' (*OED* 3), but 'A false or spurious imitation' (*OED* 1) initiates the interest in the inadequacies of art explored further in *24*.

9 **lines of life** (a) bloodlines which perpetuate (*OED* 24a); (b) outlines or living depictions of the friend in the form of his children; (c) lines of verse which confer immortality (*OED* 23e), this despite the *barren rhyme* of l. 4; (d) limits imposed on human life (*OED* s.v. 'line' 1g: 'The thread fabled to be spun by the Fates, determining the duration of a person's life'). The phrase is echoed by Hugh Holland's *Prefatory Verses* in the First Folio: 'Though his line of life went soon about, | The life yet of his lines shall never out'.
repair Cf. *3*.3 and *10*.8.

10 **pencil** and *pen* are traditionally opposed as representatives of fine art and poetry respectively in a formalized debate about the rival merits of the sister arts known in the Renaissance as a 'paragone' (for an example of which, see *Timon* 1.1.1–95). Hence 'neither the painters of this age nor my amateurish pen can represent either your inward or outward being to the life'. Q reads 'this (Times pensel or my pupill pen)', in which 'this' presumably refers to 'this sonnet', as in *18*.14. It would be odd for the poet to identify his 'pen' (which writes) with time's 'pencil' (which draws). Q could be defended, since the phrase *the lines of life* has implicitly already made such an identification: *lines* there unites pictorial outlines with lines of verse. Parallels for treating the descriptive pen as an illustrator's pencil can also be found in Canzon 2 of the anonymous *Zepheria* (1594): 'Though be thou limned in these discoloured lines, | Delicious model of my spirit's portrait, | Though be thou sable pencilled, these designs | Shadow not beauty but a sorrow's extract'. None the less the chiastic relation between *pencil* and *pen* on the one hand and 'inward *worth*' and 'outward fair' on the other makes one expect an opposition between the pen, which describes the inward, and the pencil, which depicts the outward, and such an opposition is achieved by removing Q's parenthesis.

12 **in eyes of men** (a) before men's eyes; (b) in the opinion of the world

13 **To give away** to marry, or to lose semen in sex. Compare the Solemnization of Matrimony in the Book of Common Prayer: 'who giveth this woman to be married to this man?'
keeps your self still 'eternally keeps yourself alive (through having children)'

14 **must** will be able to (Abbott §314)
drawn i.e. reproduced in children. Quibbles on 'pen' and penis are quite common in the period, as in Graziano's threat 'Well, do you so. Let me not take him then, | For if I do I'll mar the young clerk's pen' (*Merchant* 5.1.236–7).

16

But wherefore do not you a mightier way
Make war upon this bloody tyrant Time,
And fortify yourself in your decay
With means more blessèd than my barren rhyme?
Now stand you on the top of happy hours,
And many maiden gardens, yet unset,
With virtuous wish would bear your living flowers,
Much liker than your painted counterfeit:
So should the lines of life that life repair,
Which this time's pencil or my pupil pen
Neither in inward worth nor outward fair
Can make you live yourself in eyes of men:
To give away yourself keeps your self still,
And you must live drawn by your own sweet skill.

10 this time's pencil or my pupil pen] GILDON 1714; this (Times pensel or my pupill pen) Q; this, Time's pencil, or my pupil pen MALONE

1–2 **will . . . were** Subjunctive constructions were loose in this period. A contemporary reader would not have felt any lack of co-ordination between the moods of the indicative *will* and the subjunctive *were*. There is consequently no need to tinker with the punctuation of Q. (Ingram and Redpath follow Tucker in putting a question mark after l. 1 and dashes at the ends of 2 and 4 to mark what they consider to be a parenthesis. This is at the cost of an awkward disruption to the relative movements of syntactic units and quatrain.)

2 **filled** is spelled 'fild' in Q on three occasions (here, at *63*.3, and at *86*.13, set by compositors B and A respectively) and 'fil'd' once (*85*.4). This spelling may bring with it a pun on 'filed', or 'given a final artistic polish'. Before one assumes authorial artistry here, however, one should note that the character-strings 'lld' and 'll'd' do not occur in Q. Its compositors evidently would not double the final consonant of a verb's stem before a final contracted 'ed'; hence the only available form of 'filled' with a syncopated final 'ed' is 'fild' or 'fil'd (cf. the forms 'self wilde' *6*.13; 'selfe kil'd' *6*.4; 'distil'd' 5.13, *6*.2, *119*.2; comparable too are 'miscalde' *66*.11 and 'cal'd' *105*.1). Given this limitation it is noteworthy that the only occurrence in Q of 'fil'd', rather than 'fild', is at *85*.4, at a point where it is clear that 'filing' (polishing) rather than 'filling' is the primary action described ('And precious phrase by all the Muses fil'd'). It seems the compositors distinguished 'filled' and 'filed' by inserting an apostrophe in the contracted form of the latter. In which case the secondary sense 'filed' is not active here, and the anguish of a modernizing editor described by Katherine Duncan-Jones in 'Filling the Unforgiving Minute: Modernising SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS (1609)', *Essays in Criticism* 45 (1995), 199–207 would not have been shared by early modern readers.

deserts 'Meritoriousness, excellence' (*OED* 1b), probably pronounced 'desarts' to rhyme with 'parts' (cf. Q's spelling 'desart' at *49*.10)

3–4 **Though . . . parts** 'although heaven knows my verse is a dead monument which obscures your vitality and shows less than half of your abilities and attributes'. *Parts* means both 'an act (usually with qualification expresssing praise or blame)' (*OED* 11), and 'A personal quality or attribute, natural or acquired, esp. of an intellectual kind' (*OED* 12), both of which might figure on a 'monument'.

5 **write the beauty** 'A direct object declares the poet's radical ambition: not to write about but inscribe beauty on the page' (Kerrigan). The sense 'To score, outline, or draw the figure of (something); to incise' (*OED* s.v. 'write' 1a) is recorded as late as 1590, but only in the consciously archaic world of *FQ* (2.8.43: '*Guyons* shield . . . | Whereon the Faery Queenes pourtract was writ').

6 **in fresh numbers number** 'in innovative verse enumerate'. *Fresh*, though, carries a breath of vitality from its earlier uses in the sequence (e.g. *1*.9, *11*.3).

7 **This poet** The word 'poet' could be used as a term of abuse in the period, meaning 'fantastical or absurd person', as in Ben Jonson, *Works*, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols. (Oxford, 1925–53), viii.572: 'He is upbraidingly called a *Poet*, as if it were a most contemptible nick-name'; 'Commonly whoso is studious in the art [of poetry] . . . they call him in disdain a "fantastical", and a light-headed or fantastical man (by conversion) they call a "poet" ', Puttenham, 18.

8 **touches** (a) 'distinguishing qualities, characteristics, traits' (*OED* 18a); (b) 'touching a surface with the proper tool in painting, drawing, writing, carving, etc.' (*OED* 10a). The noun is associated by Shakespeare with the ravishingly real, as in *Timon* 1.1.37–8: 'It [a picture] tutors nature. Artificial strife | Lives in these touches livelier than life'.

9 **papers** poetic compositions are regularly referred to as 'papers' *c*.1600, especially those which were written for manuscript circulation in a small coterie, as in Daniel's *Delia* (1592) 39: 'O be not grieved that these my papers should | Bewray unto the world how fair thou art', and 48.5–6: 'For God forbid I should my papers blot, | With mercenary lines, with servile pen'. Petrarch too refers to his poems as *carte*, papers.

10 **of less . . . tongue** more talkative than honest. Cf. 'Old men and far travellers may lie by authority' (Dent M567).

11 **true rights** (a) praise which is accurate and deserved by you; (b) (punning on 'rites') rituals of worship which you deserve

poet's rage 'Poetic or prophetic enthusiasm or inspiration' (*OED* s.v. 'rage' 8; first cited instance), with a suggestion of

17

Who will believe my verse in time to come
If it were filled with your most high deserts?
Though yet, heaven knows, it is but as a tomb
Which hides your life, and shows not half your parts.
If I could write the beauty of your eyes,
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say 'This poet lies:
Such heavenly touches ne'er touched earthly faces.'
So should my papers (yellowed with their age)
Be scorned, like old men of less truth than tongue,
And your true rights be termed a poet's rage,
And stretchèd metre of an antique song.
But were some child of yours alive that time,
You should live twice, in it, and in my rhyme.

2 filled] Q (fild) 7–8 'This . . . faces.'] COLLIER; ^~ . . . ~.^ Q 12 metre] Q (miter)

madness, as in Chapman's *Iliad* 1.66: 'His prophetic rage | Given by Apollo'.

12 **stretchèd metre . . . song** 'irregular metre of an ancient (and "mad", via the frequent pun on "antique" and "antic") song'. *OED* quotes this passage as the first citation under 'stretched' 4a: 'Of language, ideas, prerogative, etc.: Strained beyond natural or proper limits'. This is itself a stretched point, since the earliest subsequent citation is not until 1674. It is more likely that the term alludes to perceived metrical defects in earlier versification. Uncertainty over the pronunciation (particularly of final 'e') of Middle English verse led to a frequent belief *c.* 1600 that it was metrically irregular. Here that uncertainty is projected onto Shakespeare's future readers. Cf. Daniel's *Delia*, 46.1–2: 'Let others sing of Knights and Palladines, | In aged accents, and untimely words'. *Antique* is stressed on the first syllable.

14 **rhyme** verse. By 1590 *rhyme* could be used as a term of contempt, opposed to 'poem', so there is a modest shrug here to counterpoise the optimism. Cf. *rhymers* at *38*.10.

1 **a summer's day** was proverbially perfect (cf. Dent S967).

2 **temperate** (a) moderate, even-tempered; (b) 'neither too hot nor too cold; of mild and equable temperature' (*OED* 3a)

4 **lease** temporary period of legal possession, limited by a *date*, or period of expiry. See *13*.5 and 6 nn.

6 **complexion** (a) 'Countenance, face' (*OED* 4c); (b) 'Colour, visible aspect, look, appearance' (*OED* 5 *transf.*), as in *Richard II* 3.2.190–1: 'Men judge by the complexion of the sky | The state and inclination of the day.'

7 **fair from . . . declines** every beautiful thing loses its beauty; playing on the 'fairness' of the sun's *gold complexion*.

8 **untrimmed** 'deprived of trimness or elegance; stripped of ornament' (*OED* 1; first cited usage). Cf. *K. John* 3.1.134–5: 'the devil tempts thee here | In likeness of a new untrimmèd bride', where it has been suggested that the term means 'undevirginated' (Partridge) or 'recently divested of her wedding-gown' (Schmidt). 'Deprived of the ornaments of youth' would fit both contexts, as well as tallying with the influential passage from Revelation 21: 2: 'And I John saw the holy city new Jerusalem come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride trimmed for her husband.'

10 **lose possession . . . ow'st** Nor will you lose control over the beauty which you own absolutely and for ever. This contrasts with the impermanent *lease* of l. 4 above, and does so by emphatically linking *possession* with ownership. These terms are not synonymous in law. *Possession* (especially when applied to land or property) means occupancy or enjoyment of a piece of property in a manner which brings with it the right to exercise control over it, but it does not necessarily imply ownership; hence to enjoy something fully one must have both ownership and permanent possession of it.

11 **wand'rest . . . shade** alluding to Psalm 23: 4: 'Yea, though I should walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me'.

12 **eternal lines** 'enduring lines of verse' and 'perpetual genealogical descent'; see *16*.9 note.

to time thou grow'st you become a living part of time. To *grow to* is 'to be an organic or integral part of' (*OED* 3b), as in *2 Henry IV* 1.2.85–90: '*Ser*. I pray you, sir, then set your knighthood and your soldiership aside . . . *Fal*. I lay aside that which grows to me?' See *Venus* l. 540. The addressee of the poem is like a shoot grafted into time's substance, and continues to live through either the poet's *lines* or his own bloodline.

14 **this** 'this sonnet'

18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.
  So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
  So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

1 **Devouring Time** renders Ovid's *tempus edax rerum* ('time the devourer of things'), *Met.* 15.234 (proverbial; cf. Dent T326).
paws *c.*1600 were sharper than they are now: 'The foot of a beast having claws or nails' (*OED* 1a), and in Shakespeare equivalent to 'claws', as in 'The lion, moved with pity, did endure | To have his princely paws pared all away', *Titus* 2.3.151–2.

3 **keen** sharp

4 **phoenix** 'A mythical bird, of gorgeous plumage, fabled to be the only one of its kind, and to live five or six hundred years in the Arabian desert, after which it burnt itself to ashes on a funeral pile of aromatic twigs ignited by the sun and fanned by its own wings, but only to emerge from its ashes with renewed youth, to live through another cycle of years' (*OED*). Time therefore destroys even the indestructible; although Shakespeare's readers would know that the Phoenix was immortal, and so might anticipate the ending of the poem.
in her blood both literally and 'in her prime, full vigour' (*OED* s.v. 'blood' 7)

5 **fleet'st** fly by. It is often emended, for the sake of a perfect rhyme, to 'fleets'.

6 **swift-footed Time** The thought was proverbial (Dent T327).

7 **fading sweets** perishable beauties. *Fading* is often used on the boundary between 'the diminution of some sensual delight' (usually colour, but here perhaps smell) and simple transience, or 'perishing'. Cf. *18*.9, *73*.6, *146*.6.

10 **Nor . . . no** The multiple negatives reinforce each other for emphasis, as regularly in Shakespeare.
antique (a) ancient; (b) 'antic', or mad. Stressed on the first syllable. The epithet associates the destructive artistry of Time with the *antique song* which describes the poet's own verse in *17*.12.

11 **untainted** 'Not affected by any physical taint', i.e. unmarked (*OED* 2; first cited usage). *Course* (galloping career) may activate an allusion to a hit or 'taint' in tilting (*OED* s.v. 'taint' *n.* 1a), although no other negative form of the verb is recorded.

12 **pattern** 'the archetype; that which is to be copied; an exemplar' (*OED* 1a). Hence 'leave him unsullied as an ideal example of beauty for later ages'. *Succeeding* may just carry a continued suggestion from the 'reproduction' group of 'those who succeed him, his heirs'; but at this stage of the sequence literary reproduction is beginning to oust the biological.

13 **do thy worst** a common phrase in challenges or gestures of proud but vain defiance (cf. Dent W914)

14 **ever live** Some would emend to 'live ever' for metrical smoothness; but the pressure exerted on *ever* by the slight metrical irregularity is surely deliberate, as *ever* (two syllables here, as against the usual one) labours to cover both 'live for ever' and 'live young for ever'.

19

Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws,
And make the earth devour her own sweet brood,
Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws,
And burn the long-lived phoenix in her blood,
Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleet'st,
And do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,
To the wide world and all her fading sweets:
But I forbid thee one most heinous crime,
O carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,
Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen.
Him in thy course untainted do allow
For beauty's pattern to succeeding men.
Yet do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong,
My love shall in my verse ever live young.

3 jaws] Q (yawes) 5 fleet'st] Q; fleets DYCE 14 ever live] Q; live ever *conj.* Nicholson in Cambridge 1893

1 **painted** (a) drawn, depicted; (b) made up. The poem, about a womanly man, contains only feminine rhymes (the technical term for a hypermetrical line with an additional unstressed final syllable was first used in England by Samuel Daniel *c.*1603). Feminine rhymes often occur at sexually suggestive moments, as in *Hero and Leander* ll. 555–8.

2 **master mistress** is an unprecedented phrase, often hyphenated by modern editors. Q, however, reads 'Master Mistris' which is more readily glossed as 'sovereign mistress' than its modernized equivalent. Critics debate whether it has a homosexual connotation ('both my patron and my sexual mistress'), whether it refers to the femininity of the friend's appearance, or whether it simply highlights the way in which the friend occupies the role in the sequence more usually taken by a mistress. The poet's disavowal of sexual interest in the friend in the couplet of this sonnet may neutralize any sexual charge from the phrase (as Malone coolly claims: 'Such addresses to men, however indelicate, were customary in our author's time, and neither imported criminality, nor were esteemed indecorous'), but a frisson of homoerotic pleasure was one of the joys expected by readers of late Elizabethan and Jacobean sonnet sequences, and even the couplet is fruitfully ambiguous (see Introduction, p. 130). Many glosses overlook that he is described as *the master mistress of my passion*, that is either the object of my passionate love, or the person who directs and controls my passions. The sonnet is as much concerned with the power of the friend to influence others as it is with his sexuality. *Passion*, as Dowden suggested, 'may be used in the old sense of *love-poem*, common in Watson'.
acquainted 'Quaint' is slang for the female sexual organs in this period, giving a glancing sexual pun.

4 **With . . . fashion** The mutability of women is a commonplace of the period, attributed in Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Mind in General* (dedicated to the Earl of Southampton in 1601) to 'a lack of prudence and judgement in their determinations', ed. W. W. Newbold, The Renaissance Imagination 15 (New York and London, 1986), 119.

5 **rolling** to glance at lovers

6 **Gilding . . . gazeth** To *gild* in Shakespeare is seldom simply a good thing; so both 'turning what it looks at to gold' and 'giving a superficial glitter to whatever it glances at'. The parallel between the false *rolling* of women's eyes and the *gilding* performed by the friend's eye is not accidental, and anticipates the concerns later in the sequence with his ability to falsify appearances of value.

7 **hue . . . hues** (a) 'a man whose beauty enthralls all others'; (b) continuing the theme of l. 1, 'a man in form, who is able by nature to adopt the perfect colouring of any complexion, including that of a woman'; (c) continuing the imagery of *gilding*, 'a man in form, who is able to control all appearances and to make all succumb to him'; (d) 'he is so comely that all complexions (blushing or turning pale) lie in his power' (Kerrigan, after Beeching). *Hue* moves from 'Form, shape, figure' (*OED* 1a) through 'External appearance of the face and skin, complexion' (*OED* 2), to 'Colour' (*OED* 3a). Baldwin, 165, cites Hoby's translation of Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1561): a courtier will have 'a certain grace and (as they say) a hue', which he glosses as 'noble grace'. That passage illustrates that 'hue' in the sixteenth century could be used to evoke an elegant *je ne sçais quoi*, the equivalent of Castiglione's notoriously untranslatable *sprezzatura*. Q reads '*Hews*', and its italics (on which see 1.2 n.) have spawned a generation of creatures: on the fevered workings of earlier editors' imaginations, see the admirably cool summary in Rollins 2, ii.180–5. Some are not quite fevered enough, however, and seek to emend *a man in* to 'a maiden' or 'a native'; for which neutered versions see collation.

8 **Which** can be used as either masculine or neuter relative pronoun in Shakespeare; hence 'a man who attracts the eyes of men and amazes the souls of women', or 'of a hue which . . .'.
amazeth 'To overwhelm with wonder, to astound or greatly astonish' (*OED* 4). Cf. *Venus* ll. 633–4.

9 **for a woman** (a) you were originally intended to be a woman; (b) you were made to belong to a woman. Sense (b) points back to the 'reproduction' sonnets; (a) points forward to the less certain gender relations of the later sonnets to the friend.

10 **fell a-doting** became besotted with you

11 **addition** primarily 'by addition of a penis'. Also, though, possibly alluding to the friend's high social status via the defini-

20

A woman's face with nature's own hand painted,
Hast thou, the master mistress of my passion;
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
With shifting change as is false women's fashion;
An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
A man in hue, all hues in his controlling,
Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.
And for a woman wert thou first created,
Till Nature as she wrought thee fell a-doting,
And by addition me of thee defeated,
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
But since she pricked thee out for women's pleasure,
Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure.

2 master mistress] Q (Master Mistris); master-mistress MALONE (*conj.* Capell) 7 man in] Q; maiden *conj*. Beeching; native *conj*. Mackail in Beeching; maid in *conj*. Tannenbaum in Rollins 2 hues] MALONE; *Hews* Q; hearts *conj*. Pooler

tions 'Something annexed to a man's name, to show his rank' (*OED* 4) and '(*Heraldic*) Something added to a coat of arms, as a mark of honour' (*OED* 5), citing *Troilus* 4.7.24–5 'I came to kill thee, cousin, and bear hence | A great addition earnèd in thy death'.

11 **defeated** 'To do (a person) out *of* (something expected, or naturally coming to him); to disappoint, defraud, cheat' (*OED* 7)

12 **one thing** a penis (perhaps also high rank)
nothing of no significance to me, playing on 'thing' meaning 'sexual organs' (Partridge)

13 **pricked thee out** (a) selected you from a list (*OED* 15); (b) sketched your outline; (c) equipped you with a penis. 'Prick' was common slang for a penis in the 1590s. The pun on senses (a) and (b) occurs in *2 Henry IV* 3.2.105–83, and also in Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels* 5.2.79: 'Why did the ladies prick out me?'

14 **thy love's use their treasure** (a) they have the physical act of love; (b) they enjoy the interest on the capital of love which the poet still owns; (c) they win the ability to multiply your image (alluding to the association between sexual reproduction and usury already explored in the sequence). See Introduction, p. 130.

1 **So . . . that Muse** I am not in the same case as that poet

2 **painted beauty** (a) excessively made-up woman; (b) mere secondary depiction. Sense (a) is brought to prominence by *stirred* which means both 'inspired' and 'stimulated out of torpor'.

3 **heaven . . . use** Presumably this implies that the poet is using something potentially sacred as a mere rhetorical ornament in a comparison such as those in l. 6 below. By 1600 excess of rhetorical *ornament* in verse was subjected to several attacks, notably that in Sir Philip Sidney's *Apology for Poetry* (first printed 1595), ed. G. Shepherd (Manchester, 1973), 138: 'So is that honey-flowing matron eloquence apparelled, or rather disguised, in courtesan-like painted affectation'. It is unlikely that this attack is directed against a specific 'rival poet'.

4 **rehearse** *OED* does not record a sense 'compare', which is what is required here; also perhaps 'endless repetition'.

5 **couplement of proud compare** a comparison which proudly favours the charms of his own mistress over others. *Couplement* means 'a uniting of two things in a comparison' or 'The act of coupling' (*OED* s.v. 'couplement' 1, citing this passage), with perhaps a hint at the rare sense (2b): 'Of verses: A couplet or stanza'. *Proud* is often used of the activities of rival poets in the sequence to suggest both 'boldness' and 'excessive arrogance'.

6 **sun . . . gems** are traditional instances of hyperbole. Nashe satirizes the Earl of Surrey by saying 'his tongue thrust the stars out of heaven and eclipsed the sun and moon with comparisons', Nashe, ii.270. Thomas Howard satirizes the hyperbole of Jacobean courtiers in similar terms, *Nugae Antiquae*, ed. Henry Harington, 2 vols. (1804), i.396: 'Will you say that the moon shineth all summer? That the stars are bright jewels fit for Carr's ears?'

8 **in this huge rondure hems** encloses in the vast expanse of the sky. *Rondure* is 'a circle or round object; roundness, hence the sphere of the earth as delimited by the sky' (*OED* 1; first cited usage).

9 **O let me . . . write** let me, faithful in love as I am, merely write the unornamented truth

10 **fair** beautiful; playing on 'fair complexioned'

11 **mother's child** Throughout the poem there is no explicit indicator of the gender of the beloved: *child* can be boy or girl. The play on *fair* links the poem closely with a number of the later Sonnets (e.g. *127*, *131*) to the mistress, and those associations intensify the sexual uncertainties initiated by the previous poem.

12 **gold candles** stars

13 **hearsay** oral testimony rather than truth, making an implicit opposition between the private 'writing' of Shakespeare and the public report of the imagined other poets

14 **I will not . . . sell** Cf. Berowne in *L.L.L.* 4.3.237–9: 'Fie, painted rhetoric! O, she needs it not. | To things of sale a seller's praise belongs', and Dent P546. The sonnet is aware that its protestations of plainness are themselves familiar tropes, and declares the fact in its consciously declamatory style. This is the first poem in the sequence in which the poet declaims to an audience which is larger than the friend.

21

So is it not with me as with that Muse,
Stirred by a painted beauty to his verse,
Who heaven itself for ornament doth use,
And every fair with his fair doth rehearse,
Making a couplement of proud compare
With sun and moon, with earth, and sea's rich gems,
With April's first-born flowers, and all things rare
That heaven's air in this huge rondure hems.
O let me, true in love, but truly write,
And then, believe me, my love is as fair
As any mother's child, though not so bright
As those gold candles fixed in heaven's air:
Let them say more that like of hearsay well:
I will not praise, that purpose not to sell.

5 couplement] Q; Complement GILDON

1 **old** Convention made sonneteers age rapidly: Daniel at 29, Barnfield at 20, Drayton at 31 all complain of their age. Cf. *62.9*, *73*, *138.5*.

2 **of one date** last as long as each other

3 **time's furrows** wrinkles. Cf. *2.2*. Q's 'forrwes' might conceivably be a misreading of 'sorrows', since long 'ſ' can readily be misread as 'f' by a compositor. It is likely the MS made a graphical pun on these two forms.

4 **Then . . . expiate** then I hope that death will end my days. *Expiate* is not cited before 1594. The unusual usage here ('finish', Schmidt) may derive from a slight misunderstanding of Marlowe's lines in *Dido Queen of Carthage* 5.2.316–17: 'Cursèd Iarbas, die to expiate | The grief that tires upon thine inward soul!'

5–7 The exchanging of hearts between lovers is a Petrarchan commonplace, as in *L.L.L.* 5.2.809: 'My heart is in thy breast.' Here the friend's beauty becomes the decorous covering (*seemly raiment*) for the poet's heart, which resides in the beloved's bosom. Compare the proverb 'The lover is not where he lives but where he loves' (Dent L565).

8 **elder** is a variant of 'older' (slightly antiquated by 1600)

10 **will** will be wary

11 **chary** 'carefully, tenderly' (*OED* 8 *quasi-adv.*)

13 **Presume not on** do not presumptuously lay claim to. This is a very rare usage of 'presume' (cf. *OED* 3b and 5).

22

My glass shall not persuade me I am old,
So long as youth and thou are of one date,
But when in thee time's furrows I behold,
Then look I death my days should expiate.
For all that beauty that doth cover thee
Is but the seemly raiment of my heart,
Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me.
How can I then be elder than thou art?
O therefore, love, be of thyself so wary
As I, not for myself, but for thee will,
Bearing thy heart which I will keep so chary
As tender nurse her babe from faring ill.
Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain:
Thou gav'st me thine not to give back again.

3 furrows] Q (forrwes); Sorrows GILDON 4 expiate] Q; expirate *conj*. Steevens in Malone

1 **unperfect** who does not properly know his lines. (*OED* cites this passage only). 'Perfect' is often used by Shakespeare to mean 'knowing one's lines', as in *L.L.L.* 5.2.555–6: 'I hope I was perfect. I made a little fault in "great"', and *Venus* ll. 407–8.

2 **with his . . . part** is made to forget his part by stage fright

3 **replete with** full of; here almost 'stuffed to bursting with'. Cf. *113*.13.

5 **for fear of trust** (a) afraid to trust myself; (b) fearful of the responsibility laid on me; perhaps also (c) for fear of not being believed

6 **The perfect . . . rite** the formalities due to love, and remembered exactly. Q's 'right' could be read as both 'ritual' and 'those things which are due to love as a right'. *Perfect* recalls *unperfect* from l. 1.

7 **decay** deteriorate, weaken (*OED* 1)

8 **O'ercharged** overburdened (like an overladen ship)

9 **books** Notebooks, loose sheets of writing, single paged documents all could be called *books*. Here presumably it means 'these sonnets', although some have extended it to include *Venus* and *Lucrece*. Sewell's emendation to *looks* at least has the virtue of drawing attention to the deliberate unexpectedness of *books*. Sonneteers regularly oppose the dumb eloquence of the gaze to their tongue-tied addresses to their mistresses (e.g. Griffin, *Fidessa* 45); that cliché is deliberately avoided here.

10 **dumb presagers** silent witnesses which go before. *OED* defines *presager* as 'One who or that which presages or portends', which does not quite fit this context (although it is noteworthy that it would if *books* were emended to 'looks'). The word is a new one in the 1590s, and Shakespeare seems to be using it as a near synonym for 'ambassador', rather than exploiting its associations with understanding of the future.

11 **plead** legal sense: 'To address the court as an advocate' (*OED* 2a)

12 **More . . . expressed** to a greater degree than a tongue that has uttered a greater love in more words. The second *more* is a noun: 'more love'; the first and third are adjectives.

13 **love** was near-proverbially silent (Dent L165).

14 **fine wit** sharp intelligence. Q's compositor was thrown by the play on *with* and *wit*: 'To heare wit eyes belongs to loves fine wiht'.

23

As an unperfect actor on the stage,
Who with his fear is put besides his part,
Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart;
So I, for fear of trust, forget to say
The perfect ceremony of love's rite,
And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,
O'er-charged with burden of mine own love's might:
O let my books be then the eloquence
And dumb presagers of my speaking breast,
Who plead for love, and look for recompense,
More than that tongue that more hath more expressed.
O learn to read what silent love hath writ:
To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit

6 love's rite] Q (loues right) 9 books] Q; looks SEWELL 14 with . . . wit] BENSON; wit . . . wiht Q

1 **stelled** a recently introduced term of art from painting, meaning 'To portray, delineate' (*OED* 3, citing R. Haydocke's 1598 translation of *Lomazzo* i.16: 'Before you begin to stell, delineate and trick out the proportion of a man, you ought to know his true quantity and stature', and this passage). See *Lucrece* l. 1444. Q reads 'steeld', which may be a compositor's response to an unknown word, or which may anticipate later Sonnets' concern with the permanence of steel (65.8, *120*.4).

2 **table** notebook. Cf. *122*.1 and *Hamlet* 1.5.107–9: 'My tables, | My tables—meet it is I set it down | That one may smile and smile and be a villain.'

3 **frame** (a) 'A structure, fabric, or engine constructed of parts fitted together (including an easel)' (*OED* 7a); (b) 'the human body, with reference to its make, build, or constitution' (*OED* 9a; as in 59.10); (c) 'That in which something, *esp.* a picture, pane of glass, etc. is set' (*OED* 12a). This passage is the first citation for the last of these senses. Early readers would have favoured sense (a) over sense (c).

4 **perspective** either (a) 'and the art of creating an effect of depth is the painter's highest skill', or (b) 'the art of deliberate distortion is a painter's highest skill'. The latter suits what follows, since it implies that the viewer must work his way through the distorted representations created by the painter to arrive at a 'true image'. Stressed 'pèrspective'. The emergent technical sense of *perspective* ('The art of delineating solid objects upon a plane surface so that the drawing produces the same impression of apparent relative positions and magnitudes, or of distance, as do the actual objects when viewed from a particular point' (*OED* 3a)) works alongside the more common sense, 'A picture or figure constructed so as to produce some fantastic effect; e.g. appearing distorted or confused except from one particular point of view, or presenting totally different aspects from different points' (*OED* 4b).

5–8 The conceit of the beloved's picture hanging in the bosom of the lover is a common one, as in Constable's *Diana* 1.5: 'Thine eye, the glass where I behold my heart; | Mine eye, the window through the which thine eye | May see my heart; and there thyself espy | In bloody colours how thou painted art'.

5 **you** The shift from *thy* in l. 2 may indicate a general reference ('one'). It may just be an inconsistency.

7 **shop** workshop (*OED* 3a)

9 **good turns** favours. Compare the proverb 'One good turn deserves another' (Dent T616).

10–12 **Mine eyes . . . thee** The two lovers see each other reflected in each other's eyes, a commonplace which is given a twist of Shakespearian self-consciousness: he not only looks at himself in his love's eyes; he looks at himself looking. *Perspective* here takes on an additional sense: etymologically it means 'looking through', and a desire for moral perspicuousness emerges at the end of the poem.

13 **this cunning want** lack this skill

14 **They . . . heart** The eyes can only present outward appearance, and cannot depict the heart. The note of doubt here (what is the lover thinking?) anticipates later poems.

24

Mine eye hath played the painter and hath stelled
Thy beauty's form in table of my heart;
My body is the frame wherein 'tis held,
And perspective it is best painter's art,
For through the painter must you see his skill
To find where your true image pictured lies,
Which in my bosom's shop is hanging still,
That hath his windows glazèd with thine eyes.
Now see what good turns eyes for eyes have done:
Mine eyes have drawn thy shape, and thine for me
Are windows to my breast, wherethrough the sun
Delights to peep, to gaze therein on thee.
Yet eyes this cunning want to grace their art:
They draw but what they see, know not the heart.

1 stelled] Q (steeld)

1 **in favour . . . stars** whose stars are favourable. *Stars* means 'A person's fortune, rank, or destiny, disposition or temperament, viewed as determined by the stars' (*OED* 2c).

3 **of** from

4 **Unlooked for** ignored, overlooked
joy in . . . most take my delight in my love, the object which I most honour. *Honour* shifts from 'public acclaim' (l. 2) to 'privately worship'.

6 **marigold** *OED* notes that 'The property possessed by the flower of opening when the sun shines (whence the L. name *solsequium*, F. *souci*) was often referred to by writers of the 16–17th c'.

7 **And in . . . burièd** (a) when left to themselves their glory is shut up inside them (as *marigolds* hide their petals in the dark); (b) their flaunting conceit, self-centred, dies with them. *Pride* means 'That of which any person or body of persons is proud' (*OED* 5a), and 'Magnificence, splendour' (*OED* 6a), both with strong overtones of disapproval.

8 **frown** i.e. when the sun ceases to shine or they lose the approval of their monarch

9 **painful** painstaking (*OED* 5); and, perhaps, 'full of pain'
might Q's 'worth' does not rhyme, unless *quite* in l. 11 is emended to 'forth'. Many editors adopt Malone's 'fight', which produces an alliteration too harsh even for this military context. Capell's 'might' is more likely to have been misread as 'worth', since an initial minim error on the 'm' could have led a scribe or compositor to mistake the remainder of the word.

10 **foiled** defeated

11 **razèd quite** completely erased

14 **remove** primarily 'shift place', hence 'be unfaithful' (as in *116*.4); but 'remove' is often used in moral or medical contexts in this period: 'to relieve or free one from, some feeling, quality, condition, etc., esp. one of a bad or detrimental kind' (*OED* 4a). Cf. Donne, *Satire* 2.5–9 (*c.*1595–1600): 'Though poetry indeed be such a sin | As I think that brings dearths, and Spaniards in, | Though like the pestilence and old fashioned love, | Riddlingly it catch men; and doth *remove* | Never, till it be starved out'. This meaning qualifies the optimism of the couplet's primary sense ('I am happy in that I love in a manner which is not subject to change') by suggesting that the poet has the tenacity of a disease.
beloved . . . removed is a full rhyme in Shakespearian English. Q customarily elides where terminal 'ed' is not syllabic; here, however, it reads 'beloued' and 'remoued', so it is possible that the rhymes should be pronounced 'belovèd' and 'removèd' (but see *Venus* l. 366 n.). The compositor may have confused the participle 'beloved' with the noun 'belovèd' (i.e. the object of someone's devotion) and fleshed out 'removed' accordingly.

25

Let those who are in favour with their stars
Of public honour and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
Unlooked for joy in that I honour most.
Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread
But as the marigold at the sun's eye,
And in themselves their pride lies burièd,
For at a frown they in their glory die.
The painful warrior famousèd for might
After a thousand victories, once foiled
Is from the book of honour razèd quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toiled:
  Then happy I that love and am beloved
  Where I may not remove, nor be removed.

9 might] CAPELL; worth Q; fight MALONE (*conj.* Theobald) 11 razèd quite] Q (rased quite); razèd forth COLLIER 1878 (*conj.* Theobald)

1 **vassalage** A vassal is 'In the feudal system, one holding lands from a superior on conditions of homage and allegiance' (*OED* 1). The language of vassalage is often used in dedications in this period to suggest the complete subjection of the poet to the merits of the patron. Comparisons are often made between this sonnet and the dedication to *Lucrece*, often with a view to identifying the friend with the Earl of Southampton. A large body of convention unites the two works, however, rather than a specific individual. This is the first poem since *20* in which the addressee is specified as a male.

3 **ambassage** 'The message conveyed by an ambassador' (*OED* 2, citing this passage). The sonnet is the first to be presented as an epistle, although an epistolary distance between author and addressee may be inferred from *books* in *23*.9.

4–8 **To witness . . . bestow it** 'to show my sense of obligation rather than to display my skill—and my obligation is so great that my weak invention could only diminish it, since I could never hope to find adequate words to express it. My only hope is that some benevolent wish of yours will give substance and livelihood to its naked poverty.'

10 **Points on** directs its influence towards me. Cf. *14*.6.

fair aspect benign influence. *Aspect* (stressed aspèct) carries the astrological sense 'The relative positions of the heavenly bodies as they appear to an observer on the earth's surface at a given time, which has good or bad influence over human affairs' (*OED* 4).

11 **puts apparel on** The poet's inarticulate love is presented as a ragged vagrant, who is endowed with clothing by his star, or fortune. This continues the feudal imagery of the poem's opening: the poet is clad as a retainer in the livery of his lord. Players were notionally the liveried servants of noblemen in the period after 1572.

12 **thy** Q reads 'their'. Sisson and Ingram and Redpath argue for its retention here. Since it is extremely hard to find an antecedent for the plural pronoun I follow Capell's emendation. The same error occurs at *27*.10, *35*.8, *37*.7, *43*.11, *45*.12, *46*.3, *46*.8, *46*.13, *46*.14, *69*.5, *70*.6, *128*.11, *128*.14, and may occur at *41*.11 and *85*.3. It is usually made by compositor B, although *35*.8 and *37*.7 were set by compositor A. Malone suggested that the copy contained two letter abbreviations for the personal pronoun in which 'they' and 'thy' looked alike. Another strong possibility must be that the copy for Q was revised, with 'your' being in some places overwritten with 'thy' (or vice versa), and then misread by the compositor as 'their'. Hand D in *Sir Thomas More*, usually accepted as Shakespeare's, writes 'their' at Addition 2 l. 136 and then corrects it to 'yo^{r}'. Compare the inconsistent pronouns in *24* above, which could be taken as evidence of partial revision, and *70*.1 n. The absence of such errors between *70* and *128* may indicate that the copy for that section was in a different hand.

sweet respect benign regard or care, possibly pressing also for 'esteem' (Schmidt, 6).

14 The proverbial phrase 'He dares not show his head' was sometimes used of those who feared arrest for debt, which may underlie the use of the phrase here (Dent H246).

prove try out, test. Vendler comments: 'The truest mark of infatuation is the pretense in the couplet that *prove me* rhymes with *love me*'. In all probability the phrases were a perfect rhyme in Shakespeare's English (Kökeritz, 244), as at *32*.13–14.

26

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,
To thee I send this written ambassage
To witness duty, not to show my wit;
Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine
May make seem bare, in wanting words to show it,
But that I hope some good conceit of thine
In thy soul's thought (all naked) will bestow it,
Till whatsoever star that guides my moving
Points on me graciously with fair aspect,
And puts apparel on my tattered loving
To show me worthy of thy sweet respect.
Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee;
Till then, not show my head where thou mayst prove me.

11 tattered] Q (tottered) 12 thy] MALONE (*conj.* Capell); their Q

2 **travail** Q's 'trauaill' can mean either 'travail' (labour) or 'travel'. Since the pun is worked so strongly here Q's form has been retained.
4 **expirèd** ended, with perhaps an allusion to the widespread view of sleep as a little death
5 **from far** far away from you
6 **Intend** (a) 'proceed on (a journey, etc.)' (*OED* 6); (b) 'have in the mind as a fixed purpose' (*OED* 18); (c) 'To turn one's thoughts to' (*OED* 12)
6 **zealous** is frequently used of enthusiastic religious devotion in the period, so it reinforces the devotedness of a *pilgrimage*.
8 **which** such as. It is a darkness so intense that it resembles the nothingness seen by the blind.
9 **Save** except
imaginary sight sight enabled by the faculty of imagination. Imagination is the faculty 'whereby the soul beholdeth the likeness of bodily things when they be absent', *Batman upon Bartholomew* (1582), fo. 14^{r}.
10 **thy** Q reads 'their'. See *26.12* n.
shadow 'An unreal appearance; a delusive semblance or image; a vain and unsubstantial object of pursuit. Often contrasted with *substance*' (*OED* 6 *fig.* a). The *shadow*, dark though it is, has a mental brilliance since it is the image of the beloved, whose beauty makes even a *shadow* shine through the night.
11–12 **Which . . . beauteous** Cf. *Romeo* 1.5.44–5: 'It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night | As a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ear'.
14 **For . . . for** (a) on account of; (b) 'to the comfort of'

27

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
The dear repose for limbs with travail tirèd,
But then begins a journey in my head
To work my mind, when body's work's expirèd.
For then my thoughts (from far, where I abide)
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,
Looking on darkness which the blind do see;
Save that my soul's imaginary sight
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
Which like a jewel (hung in ghastly night)
Makes black Night beauteous, and her old face new.
Lo, thus by day my limbs, by night my mind,
For thee, and for myself, no quiet find.

2 travail] Q; travel GILDON 1714 tirèd] Q; tir'd MALONE 1790 4 expirèd] Q; expir'd MALONE 1790 10 thy] MALONE (*conj.* Capell); their Q

1 **return in happy plight** come back (from the journey described in *27*) in a fortunate state
3 **day's oppression** the oppressive travel and labour of the daytime
5 **either's** each other's
6 **Do in . . . me** agree to form a partnership to oppress me
7 **The one . . . the other** are day and night respectively.
9 **to please him** Some editors mark this off by commas. Q's lack of punctuation doubles the flattery: both 'I tell the day, in order to please him, that . . .', and 'I tell the day that you are bright only to please him'.
11 **So flatter I** in a similar way I please (with a touch of deceit)
swart-complexioned dark-faced, with a suggestion of malignity
12 **twire** peep out; '*intr.* To look narrowly or covertly; to peer; to peep. Also *fig.* of a light, etc'. (*OED* 1; first cited usage)
gild'st the even give a glitter to the evening. Q reads 'guil'st th' eauen'. This could be modernized as 'guilest th' heaven', meaning 'beguile or charm the skies'. 'Gild'st' makes the friend's presence a more obvious substitute for the stars. For a similar moment where Shakespeare seems to have collapsed together guile and gilding see *Lucrece* l. 1544 and n.
14 **length** Many editors emend to 'strength'. As Kerrigan notes, this makes the couplet excessively predictable. The couplet works by using repetition to evoke endless labour (*day . . . daily*), whilst offsetting the dangerously mimetic tedium so generated by a daring interchange of length and intensity.

28

How can I then return in happy plight,
That am debarred the benefit of rest,
When day's oppression is not eased by night,
But day by night and night by day oppressed?
And each (though enemies to either's reign)
Do in consent shake hands to torture me,
The one by toil, the other to complain
How far I toil, still farther off from thee.
I tell the day to please him thou art bright,
And dost him grace when clouds do blot the heaven;
So flatter I the swart-complexioned night,
When sparkling stars twire not thou gild'st the even.
But day doth daily draw my sorrows longer,
And night doth nightly make grief's length seem stronger.

5 either's] Q (ethers); others BENSON; other's GILDON 1714 12 gild'st the even] MALONE; guil'st th'eaven Q 13–14 longer . . . length . . . stronger] Q; longer . . . strength . . . stronger CAPELL; stronger . . . length . . . longer *conj.* Capell in Malone

This and the following sonnet (linked in a cycle of woe by their opening word) make use of the conventions of complaint: the lover is isolated and apparently deprived of all means of comfort until thoughts of the friend dispel his gloom.

1 **in disgrace** out of favour
Fortune is capitalized as in Q.
men's eyes the opinions of the many
3 **bootless** fruitless, vain
5 **one more rich in hope** (a) someone with better prospects of material success; (b) someone blessed by having a greater capacity for hope
6 **Featured** having his (beautiful) looks
like him, like him The repetition of the end of one clause at the start of the next (*anadiplosis*) locks the poet into his desire to resemble others.
7 **scope** mental range (*OED* s.v. 'scope' *n.*[2] 6a; first cited usage); perhaps also 'The subject, theme, argument chosen for treatment' (*OED* 3a); and 'opportunity or liberty to act' (*OED* 7a); hence the poet envies both the potential skill ('art') and freedom of others as well as their actual range of achievement.
10 **Haply** by chance (and also 'happily')
11 **(Like . . . arising)** The parentheses are placed as in Q. Many editors extend them to include *From sullen earth* on the grounds that it is a lark rather than an abstract *state* which arises from the *sullen* (i.e. heavy, dark, melancholy) earth. *Earth*, however, can convey the sense of 'mortal nature' in this period. As punctuated here the phrase suggests a sudden uplifting of the spirit from its clayey lodging, which none the less still retains its grip on the poet: he sings hymns at heaven's gate, but *from* a position on earth.
12 **sings** The sound of the word is anticipated in 'despi*s*i*ng*' and 'ari*s*i*ng*', making the poem at this point 'fairly carol' (Vendler).
14 **kings** Q does not use possessive apostrophes, so its form 'kings' also encompasses the possessive plural 'kings' '.

29

When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state
(Like to the lark at break of day arising)
From sullen earth sings hymns at heaven's gate.
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

11–12 (Like . . . arising) . . . earth] Q; (~ . . . ~ ^ ~) MALONE; ^ ~ . . . ~ ^ ~, GILDON 1714 13 remembered] Q (remembred) 14 kings] Q; kings' OXFORD (*conj.* Wells)

1 **When** The repetition of the first word of the previous sonnet takes us back to the gloomy isolation evoked at its opening, cancelling the joyous leap of the *lark at break of day arising* of 29.11. It introduces the figure of *anamnesis*, 'a form of speech by which the speaker calling to remembrance matters past, doth make recital of them. Sometimes matters of sorrow', Peacham (1593), 76.
sessions 'A continuous series of sittings or meetings of a court' (*OED* 3a). Sonnets rooted in legal imagery were common, as in the anonymous *Zepheria*, Canzon 20: 'How often hath my pen, mine heart's solicitor | Instructed thee in breviate of my case?' The style, always tending to self-parody, was parodied in the *Gulling Sonnets* (*c.*1594) of Sir John Davies, especially 7.1–2: 'Into the Middle Temple of my heart | The wanton Cupid did himself admit . . .'. The transformation of the topos here into the gloomy inner meditation of the poet depends partly on the complaint-based solitude evoked in Sonnets *26*–9, and partly on the delicate way in which the literal scene of a courtroom is subordinated to the inner landscape of lament.

2 **summon** continues the precise legal terminology ('To cite by authority to attend at a place named, *esp.* to appear before a court or judge to answer a charge or to give evidence' (*OED* 2)), but not obtrusively, allowing for a more neutral sense, 'call to mind'.
remembrance of things past echoes Wisdom 11: 10: 'For their grief was double with mourning, and the remembrance of things past'.

4 **And with . . . waste** and I waste my precious time freshly bewailing past sorrows. Modernization delimits the possible senses of Q's 'And with old woes new waile my deare times waste', in which both 'waile' and 'waste' could function as either noun or verb, and in which either 'woes' or 'times' could be a possessive form. The line could equally well be modernized as 'And with old woes' new wail (noun) my dear times waste (verb)': actions and nouns fuse in the continuing waste of sorrow. Equally possible is 'times'' rather than 'time's'. *Dear* functions as both 'costly' (taken with *waste*) and 'beloved' (taken with *time's*). *Waste* means both 'destruction' and 'pointless expenditure'.

5, 9 **Then can** The repeated phrase establishes the presence of ancient and ineradicable grief: it means both 'at those times I am able', but it also embeds the speaker in re-enactment of the past through the archaic use of *can* to mean 'begin' (*OED n.* 2, beloved of Spenser, and found in *L.L.L.* 4.3.104).

6 **dateless** 'having no determined time of expiry'; hence 'endless'

7 **cancelled** 'Of legal documents, deeds, etc.: To annul, render void or invalid by striking across' (*OED* 1a). A presiding metaphor in this sonnet is that of a debt which has been discharged, but which retains its effect.

8 **sight** (a) things once seen; (b) sighs (archaic spelling)

9 **fore-gone** in the past (with perhaps a knowingly masochistic acknowledgement that it is hard to forgo, or renounce, grieving)

10 **heavily** sadly
tell o'er (a) relate through again; (b) sum up (anticipating *account* in the next line)

11 **fore-bemoanèd** already lamented. This is the only cited instance in *OED*.

13 **(dear friend)** This is the first time the addressee of the sonnets is called 'friend'. The word is often used of lovers or mistresses in erotic writing from the period (see *104*.1 n.). *Dear* carries a suggestion of costliness, hinting that the friend is at once a source of restoration and of loss.

14 **losses are restored** the accounts are made good; friends lost in the past come back, the waste of time is rectified. *Restored* means 'to make return or restitution of (anything previously taken away or lost)' (*OED* 1), and the financial sense is prominent given its conjunction with *pay* and *account*.

30

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste;
Then can I drown an eye (unused to flow)
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long-since-cancelled woe,
And moan th' expense of many a vanished sight;
Then can I grieve at grievances fore-gone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee (dear friend)
All losses are restored, and sorrows end.

8 sight] Q; sigh *conj.* Malone

1 **endearèd with** (a) loved by; (b) 'rendered more costly by' (*OED* 2), playing on the familiar conceit whereby a lover acquires the heart of the beloved. The sonnet continues from *30* the metaphors of past debts made good through the friend. The dominant mood here is of a triumph over death through the friend, but there is also a faint suggestion (anticipating the jealousies later in the sequence) that the poet has lost all his former lovers and thinks they are dead because they have switched their affections to the friend.

3 **loving parts** all the attributes which make people love

5 **many a** is pronounced as two syllables.
obsequious 'Through association with obsequy[2]: Dutiful in performing funeral obsequies or manifesting regard for the dead; proper to obsequies' (*OED* 1b). Three syllables.

7 **interest** continues the financial conceit of 'endearèd'; hence (a) 'Right or title to a share in something' (*OED* 1c); (b) return owing to those who lend capital. Cf. *Richard III* 2.2.47–8: 'Ah, so much interest have I in thy sorrow | As I had title in thy noble husband.'

8 **there** i.e. in your bosom. Most editors follow Gildon's emendation to 'thee', on the grounds that it is easy to misread 'thee' as 'there', and that 'there' is 'comparatively flat' (G. B. Evans). Q makes good sense, however. The referent of 'there' is clearly the friend's bosom, which in Q is referred to in each of the first two quatrains as 'there' (cf. l. 3). This prepares for the dramatic shift to *Thou* at the start of the third quatrain.

9 **live** is a dramatic surprise: after *grave* and *buried* one expects 'lie'. Whilst that deadly word is cancelled out, it also remains at the back of the reader's mind, hinting that there is something at once resurrective and vampiric in the way the beloved makes life from buried former loves.

10 **trophies** In Roman triumphs the arms of the conquered are hung from a tree as 'trophies'. So *OED* 1: 'A structure erected (originally on the field of battle, later in any public place) as a memorial of a victory in war, consisting of arms or other spoils taken from the enemy, hung upon a tree, pillar, etc. and dedicated to some divinity'.

11 **all their parts of me** all of me; the qualities and physical elements of me which they had won in the battle of love

12 **That** that which, i.e. the parts of the poet given by former lovers to the friend

13–14 **Their . . . me** The friend is presented as final embodiment of all the remembered images of the poet's former lovers. He consequently enjoys possession of all the parts of the poet which his former lovers had obtained, and so possesses the poet completely.

31

Thy bosom is endearèd with all hearts
Which I by lacking have supposèd dead,
And there reigns Love and all Love's loving parts,
And all those friends which I thought burièd.
How many a holy and obsequious tear
Hath dear religious love stol'n from mine eye,
As interest of the dead, which now appear
But things removed that hidden in there lie?
Thou art the grave where buried love doth live,
Hung with the trophies of my lovers gone,
Who all their parts of me to thee did give;
That due of many, now is thine alone.
  Their images I loved I view in thee,
  And thou (all they) hast all the all of me.

8 there] Q; thee GILDON

The death of former lovers imagined in the previous poem is now extended to include the death of the poet too. Verse is here no longer intrinsically the agent of immortality: it needs to be read affectionately by its addressee in order to have permanent value. A copy of the poem, which dates from *c.*1650, exists in Folger MS V.a.162, fo. 26^{r}.

1 **well-contented day** 'the day when I am content to die'. 'Day' can refer to a point at which a debt becomes due (*OED* 12), a sense active here through the idea of death as the moment when one pays one's last debt to nature. 'Content' too can mean 'To satisfy (a person) by full payment' (*OED* 4).

3 **by fortune** by chance
resurvey is unusual in the sense 'to read again'. It may imply deliberative reading, as in Shakespeare's only other usage: 'I have but with a cursitory eye | O'erglanced the articles. Pleaseth your grace | To appoint some of your council presently | To sit with us once more, with better heed | To re-survey them', *Henry V* 5.2.77–8.

4 **These poor . . . lover**, Q's punctuation 're-survay: | These poore rude lines of thy deceased Louer:' is defended by William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* rev. edn. (1953), 51, on the grounds that 'Line 4 is isolated between colons, carries the whole weight of the pathos'; it is as if the Sonnet 'was making a quotation from a tombstone'.

5 **the bett'ring of the time** the superior productions of the present. *OED* cites this passage to support the definition 2: 'The process of becoming better; improvement, progress in a right direction', which seems less likely.

6 **outstripped** is a vogue-word in the 1590s, meaning 'To excel, surpass, get ahead of, or leave behind, in any kind of competition, or in any respect in which things may be compared' (*OED* 2).

7 **Reserve** keep, preserve. Compare *85*.3, where the same word is used of treasured writings.

8 **the height** the high achievement
happier more fortunate

9 **vouchsafe me but** condescend to grant me just this one

10–14 **'Had . . . love.'** Q does not mark direct speech by quotation marks. This imagined future voice of the friend would have seemed extraordinarily prophetic to many readers in 1609, who were reading a sequence which both harked back to and *outstripped* the vogue for sonnet sequences in the 1590s.

11 **a dearer birth than this** (a) a better poem than this sonnet; (b) a poem of richer, more aristocratic lineage

12 **To march . . . equipage** worthy of joining a company of better poets. 'Equipage' here is said by *OED* to mean (2) 'The state or condition of being equipped; equipment'. It is more likely to anticipate the slightly later sense (*OED* 9): 'Formal state or order; ceremonious display; the "style" of a domestic establishment, etc.'. Had the poet lived later he would have been capable of producing poems of a *dearer birth*, which could hold their own in the company of the higher born.

13 **better prove** turn out now to be better

32

If thou survive my well-contented day,
When that churl Death my bones with dust shall cover,
And shalt by fortune once more resurvey
These poor, rude lines of thy deceasèd lover,
Compare them with the bett'ring of the time,
And, though they be outstripped by every pen,
Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme,
Exceeded by the height of happier men.
O then vouchsafe me but this loving thought:
'Had my friend's Muse grown with this growing age,
A dearer birth than this his love had brought,
To march in ranks of better equipage:
  But since he died, and poets better prove,
  Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love.'

8 height] Q; high FOL5 10–14 'Had . . . love.'] MALONE (*italics*); ^~ . . . ~.^ Q 11 birth] Q; love FOL5

1 **Full** very

2 **Flatter . . . eye** There is a paradox in a *sovereign* flattering his subordinates; the idea is that the morning, like a gracious monarch, elevates the mountains by deigning to gaze at them.

4 **Gilding . . . alchemy** The sun is also presented as an alchemist, capable of transmuting base metals to gold, in *K. John* 3.1.3–6: 'To solemnize this day, the glorious sun | Stays in his course and plays the alchemist, | Turning with splendour of his precious eye | The meagre cloddy earth to glittering gold.' See also *Venus* ll. 856–8.

5 **Anon** soon

basest (a) lowest born; (b) the meanest of substance; (c) possibly 'darkest' (*OED* 5: the cited instances are all from medical contexts, and the sense is not recorded in Schmidt. Kerrigan cites 'the base Indian' from *Othello* 5.2.356 to support the sense, but the epithet there may well not refer to colour).

5–6 **Anon . . . face** The marked reminiscence of Prince Harry in *1 Henry IV* (*c.*1598), the heir to the throne who wishes temporarily to mix with low-born companions, supports other evidence which places Sonnets *1–60* in the mid-to-late 1590s (see Introduction, pp. 104–5): *1 Henry IV* 1.2.194–200: 'Yet herein will I imitate the sun, | Who doth permit the base contagious clouds | To smother up his beauty from the world, | That when he please again to be himself, | Being wanted he may be more wondered at | By breaking through the foul and ugly mists | Of vapours that did seem to strangle him'. In both passages the sun is presented as an active agent which allows the clouds to dull its glitter.

6 **rack** 'Clouds, or a mass of cloud, driven before the wind in the upper air' (*OED* 3a); with a play on 'wrack', or 'ignominious destruction'

7 **forlorn** is stressed on the first syllable.

11 **out alack** is an exclamation of despair. Some editors make the two words into separate exclamations or add punctuation between them, but this runs against the majority of usages in early modern literature.

12 **region cloud** 'the clouds of the air'. 'Region' can mean 'A separate part or division of the world or universe, as the air, heaven, etc.' (*OED* 3a), as it does in *Hamlet* 2.2.488–9: 'anon the dreadful thunder | Doth rend the region'. The usage may be archaic, since the *Hamlet* passage is from the player's archaizing speech on Hecuba. Here it is used in the uninflected genitive form.

14 **Suns . . . staineth** 'Mortal rulers may perfectly well pollute their region when the heavenly sun does so too.' *Stain* may mean physically to pollute with something, or morally to corrupt, and can also be used 'Of the sun, etc.: To deprive (feebler luminaries) of their lustre. Also *fig.* of a person or thing: To throw into the shade by superior beauty or excellence; to eclipse' (*OED* 1b). The context implies the unparalleled sense 'allow others to dim *their* brightness'. The innocent meteorological accidents that cover the sun at the start of the poem, though, have turned into moral contaminations, in which the sun itself (and by implication the friend) plays its part. Q's 'stainteh', combined with the repetition of 'stain', may indicate textual corruption, although the repetition may serve to heighten the pressure put on the word by the poet's desire not to say explicitly that the presence of clouds darkening the lover's brightness is the friend's fault.

33

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy,
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:
Even so my sun one early morn did shine
With all triumphant splendour on my brow;
But out alack, he was but one hour mine,
The region cloud hath masked him from me now.
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth:
Suns of the world may stain, when heaven's sun staineth.

8 west] Q; rest *conj.* Steevens in Malone 11 But out alack,] Q; ~ ^ ~, ~! GILDON 1714; ~ ~! ~! KNIGHT; ~, ~, ~! DOWDEN; out alas FOL4 14 staineth] BENSON; stainteh Q

1–2 **Why . . . cloak** Cf. 'Although the sun shines, leave not thy cloak at home' (Dent S968). A *cloak* is the sixteenth-century equivalent of an overcoat.

3 **base clouds** See *33*.5 n. Here the sun does not collude with the clouds as it does in *33* but is reluctant to allow his glory to be obscured.

4 **brav'ry** finery, fineness. *O'ertake* hints at a literal scenario in which a group of retainers who surround a lord pass by the poet, keeping him from view and fouling his journey.

7 **salve** 'A healing ointment for application to wounds or sores' (*OED* 1a). The sun simply dries the poet's tears rather than curing their cause. The image of the all-powerful sun is broken off before the conclusion of the octave and is supplanted by a vocabulary of wounds and sin, as though it is impossible to sustain the laudatory image of the friend with which the poem began, and as though the friend remains on the surface level, drying tears as the sun dries the rain, rather than recognizing the full extent of the wrong he has committed.

8 **disgrace** suggests a spiritual rather than a material hurt. The *disgrace* concerned could be the ignominy suffered by the poet or the ungracious conduct of the friend, or both.

9 **shame . . . physic** 'nor can your public repentance cure my pain'. *Grief* means both 'a bodily injury or ailment . . . a disease, sickness' (*OED* 5a) and 'mental pain, distress, or sorrow' (*OED* 7a).

12 **cross** Q's 'loss' is probably the result of eyeskip by the compositor. To 'bear one's cross' is a set phrase meaning 'to endure one's allotted suffering patiently'. It derives from Matthew 10: 38: 'And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.'

13 **Ah** The exclamation occurs at *67*.1, *90*.5, *104*.9. Only here is it at the start of the couplet. It always expresses ruefully resistant yielding to the inevitable.

pearl was believed to have medicinal properties, but the suggestion that the lover is buying forgiveness with tokens of value is strong here. Throughout the poem the friend is responding to the poet's complaint, first by drying his tears and then finally by weeping. The tears at the end do mark a kind of recognition of the friend's guilt, since they show that he is willing to identify himself not just with the sovereign sun, but also with the clouds that produce rain (or tears).

sheds Q's 'sheeds' is likely to reflect contemporary (Warwickshire) pronunciation. For a similar rhyme, see *Lucrece* l. 1549.

14 **rich** valuable

ransom 'To atone or pay for, to expiate' (*OED* 1d); with perhaps a suggestion that the tears *merely* make financial restitution rather than full atonement for the wrong

34

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,
Hiding thy brav'ry in their rotten smoke?
'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
For no man well of such a salve can speak
That heals the wound and cures not the disgrace;
Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief:
Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss.
Th' offender's sorrow lends but weak relief
To him that bears the strong offence's cross.
Ah, but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,
And they are rich, and ransom all ill deeds.

2 travel] Q (trauaile) 12 cross] MALONE (*conj.* Capell); losse Q 13 sheds] Q (sheeds)

1 **No more** no longer

2 **Roses have thorns** Compare the proverb 'No rose without a thorn' (Dent R182).
mud strongly pejorative, used in *OED* sense 2 *fig.* a, 'As a type of what is worthless or polluting'. Compare *Lucrece* l. 577.

3 **stain** obscure. See *33*.14 n.

4 **canker** 'A caterpillar, or any insect larva, which destroys the buds and leaves of plants; a canker-worm' (*OED* 4), here used as a type of that which defiles beauty. 'The canker soonest eats the fairest rose' (Dent C56).

5 **All men make faults** turns the passive conception of fallibility embedded in the proverb 'Every man has his faults' (Dent M116) into an active principle. To 'make fault' is a standard idiom for 'to be in the wrong', as in *Antony* 2.5.74: 'I have made no fault.'
even 'Euen' occurs 22 times in the Sonnets. It is disyllabic only four times (here, *39*.5, *41*.11, and *48*.13). These cases all occur in the group *1–60*, which was probably composed in the mid-to-late 1590s, and they all mark a very strong rhetorical emphasis.

5 **in this** (a) by doing this, that is . . . ; (b) in this poem

6 **Authorizing . . . compare** 'giving your sin a validity and authority through making comparisons', like those in ll. 1–4. *Authorizing* is stressed on the second syllable. A rose cannot be blamed for having thorns, nor can silver fountains be blamed for their mud, so the comparisons make the addressee's sins appear to be involuntary. This line makes implicit the hints in *33* and *34* that the poet is fully aware that he is vainly seeking to exonerate the friend by comparing him to natural phenomena such as the sun.

7 **salving . . . amiss** 'in curing your fault'. To 'salve' may imply palliation rather than cure, as it may mean 'To anoint (a wound, wounded part) with salve or healing unguent' (*OED* 1a). Compare *34*.7.

8 **Excusing . . . are** 'providing your sins with excuses which are even greater than the sins themselves require'. Q reads 'their' twice (see collation). For the 'their' for 'thy' error, see *26*.12 n. Some editors read 'thy' and 'their', and refer 'their' back to the inanimate objects of the first quatrain: so, 'Exculpating your sins to a greater extent than the sins of inanimate objects (cankers in roses and so on) extend', or to *all men*. G. B. Evans suggests emending 'Excusing' to 'Accusing' as well as emending both 'their's to 'thy's. This makes the line easy to gloss ('condemning your sins more than they deserve'), but misses the point of the poem, which is that the poet is corrupting himself, and by extension his art, in his excessive efforts to exculpate his friend.

9 **For to . . . sense** I provide arguments to support your fleshly failing. 'Sense' means 'the rational faculties' (*OED* 10b), but its usage here is deliberately contaminated by 'The faculties of corporeal sensation considered as channels for gratifying the desire for pleasure and the lusts of the flesh' (*OED* 4a). A sweet flavour of 'incense' may waft from the phrase.

10 **Thy adverse . . . advocate** 'your opponent, who should be pleading against you, is in fact pleading for you'. *Party*, *advocate*, *plea*, and *commence* evoke a courtroom scene.

13 **accessary** 'In *Law*: He who is not the chief actor in the offence, nor present at its performance, but in some way concerned therein, either before or after the fact committed' (*OED* 1). Stressed on the first syllable. The poet is an *accessary* after the fact through his efforts to exculpate the lover.

14 **sourly** 'churlishly (in action), bitterly (in effect)' (Kerrigan). The paradox depends on a legal distinction between theft and robbery. A *thief* steals furtively, and so might be *sweet*; robbery, however, is the open and forcible taking of property which belongs to another.

35

No more be grieved at that which thou hast done:
Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud,
Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,
And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.
All men make faults, and even I in this,
Authorizing thy trespass with compare,
Myself corrupting salving thy amiss,
Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are:
For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense—
Thy adverse party is thy advocate—
And 'gainst myself a lawful plea commence:
Such civil war is in my love and hate
That I an accessary needs must be
To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me.

8 thy . . . thy] MALONE (*conj.* Capell); their . . . their Q; thy . . . their WYNDHAM; their . . . thy BULLEN; thee . . . thy *conj.* Beeching; these . . . these DUNCAN-JONES 9–10 in sense— . . . advocate—] MALONE (*brackets*); in sence, . . . Aduocate, Q; Incense, . . . Advocate GILDON 1714

1 **Let me confess** Coming as it does immediately after the previous sonnet's recognition that the poet's techniques of praise have been self-deceiving, this phrase might be taken as a recognition that the love must end. It may also introduce a rhetorical supposition, rather than a reluctant acceptance. So 'Suppose I do recognise . . .' more than 'I must acknowledge . . .'.

twain 'two separate people'. *OED* cites this as the first instance of 3a: 'disunited, estranged, at variance', as also in *Troilus* 3.1.98–9: 'No, she'll none of him. They two are twain', and Drayton's *Idea* (1619) 9.9–10: 'Thus talking idly in this Bedlam fit, | Reason and I (you must conceive) are twain'.

3 **So . . . blots** 'In those circumstances the moral stains that already reside chiefly in me will be borne exclusively by me without your help.' *Blots* means 'a moral stain; a disgrace, fault, blemish' (*OED* 2 *fig.* a); possibly also suggesting tears. Q's punctuation (followed here) allows *Without thy help* to point backwards to *with me remain* as well as forwards. This creates the impression that separation will simply reinforce what is already the case, that the poet bears the weight of shame.

5 **one respect** 'one mutual regard'. In logical contexts 'respect' can be used to suggest that without a relationship to each other two entities do not exist, which is a piquant suggestion here. Also note *OED* 16a: 'Deferential regard or esteem felt or shown towards a person or thing', a sense which is developed in the couplet.

6 **separable spite** 'a malicious force which parts us'. *OED* cites only this passage s.v. 'separable' 2: '? Capable of separating'. The usage derives from Shakespeare's habit of reversing adjective and abstract noun, as in *composèd wonder* (59.10).

7–8 **Which . . . delight** 'which, although it does not affect the unity of our love for each other, does cause us to spend hours apart'. *Love* in l. 7 refers to the emotion; in l. 8 it suggests physical proximity.

9–10 **I may . . . shame** 'I am permanently prevented from greeting you in public, in case my publicly recognized guilt should adversely affect your reputation.' *Acknowledge* 'To recognize (one) to be what he claims; to own the claims or authority of' (*OED* 2b).

11–12 **Nor thou . . . name** 'nor can you grace me with a public show of recognition, without accordingly detracting from the status of your name'

13–14 **But . . . report** 'But do not lessen your honour by acknowledging me: I love in such a way that, since you are mine, your reputation is also my reputation', hence if the friend diminishes his own honourable standing he also detracts from that of the poet. This couplet is duplicated in 96.13–14, q.v.

36

Let me confess that we two must be twain,
Although our undivided loves are one:
So shall those blots that do with me remain,
Without thy help by me be borne alone.
In our two loves there is but one respect,
Though in our lives a separable spite,
Which, though it alter not love's sole effect,
Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight.
I may not evermore acknowledge thee,
Lest my bewailèd guilt should do thee shame,
Nor thou with public kindness honour me,
Unless thou take that honour from thy name:
But do not so; I love thee in such sort
As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

Sonnets *37* and *38* appear to disrupt a sequence of poems on separation and estrangement which is resumed in *39*. They may, as Vendler (191) suggests, be earlier work inserted slightly awkwardly into the sequence. Given that *36* ends with a couplet that is repeated in *96* there may well have been some irregularity in the MS at this point. However, these two poems do continue the wounded selflessness of the end of *36*, in which the poet takes a surrogate delight in the successes of the friend, and they prepare for the suggestion in *39* that praise of the friend is in fact self-praise.

3 **made lame . . . spite** To be *made lame* by Fortune is to suffer material disadvantages as a result of chance misfortunes, as in *Lear* (Quarto) Scene 20.213: 'A most poor man made lame by fortune's blows'. Many earlier editors combined this passage with *89*.3 to make Shakespeare lame indeed, even after Malone's sage words in 1790: 'If the words are to be understood literally we must then suppose that . . . [he] was also *poor* and *despised*, for neither of which suppositions there is the smallest ground'.

4 **of** from

5 **wit** intelligence

7 **Entitled . . . sit** with due entitlement sit like kings among your excellent qualities. This is the easiest solution to a crux which has generated more than its due of commentary. Q reads 'Intitled in their parts, do crowned sit'. Some editors follow Q's 'their', and interpret 'entitled by their own good qualities'. Others, following a less than lucid note by Wyndham, find an allusion to heraldry in which the *parts* each find their respective places in an escutcheon. On the their/thy error, see *26*.12 n.

8 **I make . . . store** 'like a gardener I graft my love on to the rich supply of your virtues, from which it draws life and nourishment'

10 **Whilst . . . give** 'while the image of your virtues gives body and sustenance to my poverty'. *Shadow* may also mean 'protective shade'. Since *shadow* is normally the subsidiary product of a *substance* the line paradoxically suggests that the mere image of the friend's virtues can give life to the poet. The suggested emendation of 'this' to 'thy' in the Bodley-Caldecott copy appears to be in a nineteenth-century hand.

11 **abundance** (a) store (of qualities); (b) generosity

12 **part** mere portion

13 **Look what** whatever

14 **This . . . me** Since the poet is grafted onto the *store* of the friend, then any increase in it will also benefit him.

37

As a decrepit father takes delight
To see his active child do deeds of youth,
So I, made lame by Fortune's dearest spite,
Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth.
For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit,
Or any of these all, or all, or more,
Entitled in thy parts do crownèd sit,
I make my love engrafted to this store.
So then I am not lame, poor, nor despised,
Whilst that this shadow doth such substance give
That I in thy abundance am sufficed,
And by a part of all thy glory live.
  Look what is best, that best I wish in thee;
  This wish I have, then ten times happy me.

7 thy] MALONE (*conj.* Capell); their Q 10 this] Q; thy *MS conj. in Bodley-Caldecott*

1 **want . . . invent** lack subject matter to write about. The context pushes *invent* away from its usual sense in sixteenth-century rhetoric, 'to find out (pre-existing) matter for a poem' (corresponding to the Latin *inventio*), to the emergent sense, 'To compose as a work of imagination or literary art' (*OED* 1b).

3 **argument** 'subject for a poem' (*OED* 6), as in Prince Harry's dry comment to Falstaff (*1 Henry IV* 2.5.284–5): 'and the argument shall be thy running away'.

4 **vulgar paper** writing open to the public view; perhaps 'printed poem'. See *17*.9 n.
rehearse repeat

6 **stand against thy sight** The standard gloss 'meets your eye' is too flat. To *stand against* usually means in Shakespeare 'to oppose, to offer resistance' (Schmidt, 7a; *OED* 67); hence perhaps 'withstand the rigour of your scrutiny'.

7 **dumb** silent, inarticulate, dull-spirited

8 **invention** 'the faculty for finding out matter for a poem' (*OED* 1d): 'Rhet. The finding out or selection of topics to be treated, or arguments to be used'.
thou . . . light The friend is so remarkable that he illuminates and ignites the powers of composition.

9 **tenth Muse** Drayton also added his love to the orthodox total of nine muses (as well as to the nine worthies and the nine orders of angels) in *Idea's Mirror* (1594), sonnet 8. The reason for this may well be that although there is a muse for lyric love poetry (Erato) there is no muse for panegyric. The thought was near-proverbial (Dent T91.1).

10 **rhymers** is said with a sneer. It is often opposed to 'poet' in the period and means 'mere rhymester'.

11 **bring forth** The association of poetic composition and birth is also common in the period, as in *76*.8.

12 **Eternal numbers** everlasting verses
outlive long date which will endure even beyond the longest possible term of expiry

13 **curious** 'difficult to satisfy; particular; nice, fastidious' (*OED* 2)

14 **pain** trouble; but the whole phrase recalls *36*.4, which releases the sense 'physical anguish'
thine . . . praise (a) you, as the person who inspires my verse, shall deserve all the acclaim; (b) the poems will relate your praises.

38

How can my Muse want subject to invent,
While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse
Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
For every vulgar paper to rehearse?
O give thyself the thanks if aught in me
Worthy perusal stand against thy sight,
For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,
When thou thyself dost give invention light?
Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth
Than those old nine which rhymers invocate;
And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth
Eternal numbers to outlive long date.
If my slight Muse do please these curious days,
The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.

This poem appears to continue the argument of *36*, on which see the headnote to *37*. It attempts to find a justification for separation on the grounds that it enables the poet to praise the friend without seeming also to praise himself. It plays on the proverbial phrase 'A friend is one's second self' (Dent F696), which was frequently cited in philosophical discussions of friendship: 'a friend is a second self, and that whosoever would take upon him this title in regard of another, he must transform himself into his nature whom he purposeth to love', Pierre de la Primaudaye, *The French Academy*, trans. Thomas Bowles (1589), 131.

1 **worth** (a) value; (b) merit; (c) value to me
manners 'Good "manners", customs, or way of living' (*OED* 3d). The first two lines mean 'How can I praise you with due modesty when you are both the larger and the better part of me?'

3–4 **What can . . . thee?** 'How can my own praise add to what is myself, and what else is it to praise you than to praise myself?' Underlying these lines is an assumption that lover and beloved are one flesh, which may have its roots in Ephesians 5: 28–31, 'He that loveth his wife loveth himself: for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church', a passage which figures prominently in the Solemnization of Matrimony in the Book of Common Prayer.

5 **Even for this . . . divided** 'for this reason let us live apart'. *Divided* has strong pejorative associations in Shakespeare, as in *OED* 1a: 'Split, cut, or broken into pieces; incomplete, imperfect', 3: 'Separated in opinion or interest; discordant, at variance; split into parties or factions', and *Richard III* 1.4.233: 'He little thought of this divided friendship'. These bitter associations are compounded by the emphatic disyllabic use of 'even' (on which see 35.5 n.), which here occurs, uniquely in the Sonnets, at the start of the line, forcing a trochaic inverted first foot.

6 **lose name of single one** (a) lose the reputation of being a union of two people into one; (b) stop being open to description as a single love, rather than two

8 **That due . . . alone** 'return to your exclusive ownership the praise that we have hitherto shared'. In other words if the poet and the friend separate the poet will then be able to praise the friend as he deserves without being accused of self-flattery.

10 **sour** bitter. The word (and its derivate adverb) is prominent at this stage in the sequence: the only other occurrences are at *35*.14 and *41*.8.

11 **entertain the time** while away the time. Cf. *Lucrece* l. 1361.

12 **Which time . . . deceive** 'You, absence, beguilingly charm away that time and those thoughts.' Many editors follow Malone in emending *dost* to 'doth', which takes *love* as its subject ('love, which sweetly beguiles time and thoughts'). Others favour Capell's 'do', which either takes *time and thoughts* as its subject and *which* as a relative pronoun ('all of which time and thoughts sweetly beguile'), or else takes *thoughts of love* as its subject. In Q's favour is that it allows the negative associations of *deceive* to emerge: *absence* encourages lovers to indulge in the false satisfaction of merely thinking time away by imagining the beloved.

13–14 **And that . . . remain** 'were it not for the fact that you teach me, on my own here, to become two people by praising my absent love'. The act of praising the friend makes him present. Note, however, the negative associations of *twain* elsewhere, as in *36*.1, where it means 'two separate people'. This makes the optimism of the couplet seem forced, and compounds the sinister associations of *deceive* in l. 12.

39

O, how thy worth with manners may I sing,
When thou art all the better part of me?
What can mine own praise to mine own self bring,
And what is 't but mine own when I praise thee?
Even for this, let us divided live,
And our dear love lose name of single one,
That by this separation I may give
That due to thee which thou deserv'st alone.
O absence, what a torment wouldst thou prove,
Were it not thy sour leisure gave sweet leave
To entertain the time with thoughts of love,
Which time and thoughts so sweetly dost deceive;
And that thou teachest how to make one twain,
By praising him here who doth hence remain.

12 dost] Q; doth MALONE; do CAPELL

1 **my loves** is pitched throughout the sonnet deliberately and dangerously between 'feelings of love' and 'lovers'. Sonnets *40–3* imply that the friend has taken away a lover from the poet, which anticipates the betrayals explored in a number of sonnets between *133* and *152*.

4 **All mine . . . more** 'All my true love was yours before you received this additional love (or lover).' The promise 'With all my worldly goods I thee endow' of the marriage service is not far away from the chime on *mine* and *thine*.

5–6 **Then . . . usest** (a) if you take my lover in the place of my love, I cannot rebuke you, since you are making good use of my love (and my lover); (b) if you take my lover because she is another recipient of my love, I cannot rebuke you. . . . 'The coolly reasonable "I can't blame you for your conduct because you did it for love of me" (compare *42.6*) is undercut by a sardonic "I can't blame you for sexually enjoying my mistress" ' (Kerrigan).

7–8 **But yet . . . refusest** These are very obscure lines. Presumably their gist is that the poet *will* blame the friend if he is simply stealing his lover in order to try him or her out, rather than keeping her or him for permanent use and (implicitly) multiplication. He will blame him the more because such sensuous sampling runs counter to the promptings of the friend's better self (*what thyself refusest*). *This self* is the poet (part of the friend's self through their fusion of identities), which yields the additional possible suggestion that the friend is granting sexual favours to the poet's *love* which he is denying to the poet himself. *Thyself* is usually glossed 'your true self', but could as well be a simple reflexive. *Refusest* means primarily 'reject' (Schmidt, 3), although it may draw on *OED* 6: 'to cast off (a person); to divorce (a wife)', as in *Much Ado* 4.1.186: 'Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death'. *Wilful* means 'stubborn, perverse and lustful'. Some editors emend *this self* to *thyself*; however, this mutes the opposition between the self which deceives and the 'true' self which resists sensual allurements, and which is implicitly identified with the poet. Ingram and Redpath propose that Q's 'thy selfe' in l. 8 may result from compositorial eyeskip and propose the emendation 'thy sense' (meaning 'your rational powers'). This proposal warrants serious attention: the play on *sense* which would result, meaning at once 'rationality' and 'sensuality', has a parallel in *35.9*.

9 **gentle** kindly; perhaps also 'well-born'. A plea of mitigation is implicitly made in the move from *robbery* (forcible and open removal of property) to *thief* (one who only surreptitiously removes property).

10 **steal thee . . . poverty** steal for yourself the little I have. On the ethical dative (steal for yourself), see Abbott § 220.

13 **Lascivious grace** (a) libidinous elegance; (b) lustful generosity. *Grace* is usually used in the vocative in addresses to members of the nobility, so a further sense of 'lustful nobleman' is vestigially registered.

40

Take all my loves, my love, yea, take them all:
What hast thou then more than thou hadst before?
No love, my love, that thou mayst true love call:
All mine was thine before thou hadst this more.
Then if for my love thou my love receivest,
I cannot blame thee, for my love thou usest;
But yet be blamed, if thou this self deceivest
By wilful taste of what thyself refusest.
I do forgive thy robb'ry, gentle thief,
Although thou steal thee all my poverty;
And yet love knows it is a greater grief
To bear love's wrong than hate's known injury.
Lascivious grace, in whom all ill well shows,
Kill me with spites, yet we must not be foes.

7 this self] Q; thy self GILDON 8 thyself] Q; thy sense *conj*. Ingram and Redpath

1 **pretty wrongs** wicked or unfair actions made beautiful by the fact that they are committed by the friend
liberty (a) freedom; (b) 'Unrestrained action, conduct, or expression; freedom of behaviour or speech, beyond what is granted or recognized as proper; licence' (*OED* 5a)
2 **sometime** sometimes
3 **befits** suits; also with a sarcastic tone, 'is entirely appropriate to'. The plural subject with a singular verb is not unusual in the period.
5 **Gentle** puns on 'well-born' (*OED* 1a), and 'noble, generous, courteous' (*OED* 3a), and 'kind, tender' (*OED* 8). The friend is noble, of good character (therefore inviting suitors), and as yielding as a woman. This is reinforced by the echo of the proverb 'She is a woman, therefore to be won' (cf. *1 Henry VI* 5.5.35 and *Titus* 2.1.83–4), and by the *parison* (repeated syntactic structure) of ll. 4 and 5.
8 **he** Many editors emend to 'she'. The bitterness of Q's 'he', though, is right: the woman initiates an encounter from which she emerges the loser. The suggestion of blame directed at the friend for his active part in prevailing suits the sourness of this sonnet. On *sourly*, see 39.10 n.
9 **thou mightst . . . forbear** at least you might abstain from corrupting the central place of my love. *Seat* means 'place of occupation', with a suggestion of sexual ownership, as in *Othello* 2.1.294–5: 'I do suspect the lusty Moor | Hath leaped into my seat'. There may be a bawdy sense in play, via *OED* 9a: 'The sitting part of the body; the posteriors', first cited 1607; but such a direct suggestion of buggery would make it exceptional in the Sonnets.
11 **Who** which (beauty and youth are almost personified)
their riot uncontrolled dissipation. Conceivably 'their' should be amended to 'thy'. See *26*.12 n.
even On this emphatic disyllabic use of 'even', see 35.5 n. above.
12 **truth** 'troth', or vow
13–14 **Hers . . . me** 'You break her vow to me because your beauty has led her to abandon me, and you break your vow to me because your beauty has made you false to me.' *Beauty* becomes an autonomous force independent of the friend as the poet labours to exculpate him, but the shift from *temptation* in l. 4 (where the friend is its passive victim) to *tempting* in l. 13 (where the friend is using his beauty in order to tempt) does not simply let him off the hook. *Tempting* could be consonant with either 'thou' or *beauty*; *being false* similarly struggles to attribute to *beauty* a betrayal which is actually that of the friend.

41

Those pretty wrongs that liberty commits,
When I am sometime absent from thy heart,
Thy beauty and thy years full well befits,
For still temptation follows where thou art.
Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won;
Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assailèd.
And when a woman woos what woman's son
Will sourly leave her till he have prevailèd?
Ay me, but yet thou mightst my seat forbear,
And chide thy beauty and thy straying youth,
Who lead thee in their riot even there
Where thou art forced to break a two-fold truth:
  Hers, by thy beauty tempting her to thee,
  Thine, by thy beauty being false to me.

6 assailèd] Q; assail'd MALONE 8 he] Q; she MALONE prevailèd] Q; prevail'd MALONE 9 mightst] BENSON; mighst Q

1 **all my grief** (a) entirely a source of grief to me; (b) the entirety of my suffering—there is more

2 **dearly** (a) affectionately, fondly; (b) at a high price; at great cost

3 **of my wailing chief** the main cause of my complaint

4 **that touches . . . nearly** which strikes closer to my heart (than the loss of her)

5 **Loving offenders** is both a vocative ('You loving criminals'), and perhaps too a participle clause, 'Since I love you offenders'. As at the end of the previous sonnet slippery participles are letting the poet blame and love at once.

7 **And for . . . abuse me** 'And she in a similar way loves you (and so *abuses* me) because she knows that I love you.' Abuse means (a) 'to injure, wrong, or hurt' (*OED* 5); (b) 'To make a wrong use of anyone's confidence; to impose upon, cheat, or deceive (a person)' (*OED* 4a).

8 **Suff'ring** allowing. The participle could agree with either 'she' or 'me'.
approve 'To put to the proof or test of experience; to try, test' (*OED* 8). Here with an undertone of 'try out sexually'.

9, 10 **lose . . . losing** Q reads 'loose' and 'loosing', which might be modernized as 'loosing' and so give the poet the consolation of having voluntarily relinquished his loves.

9 **my love's** the mistress's. The idiom vainly tries to wrest some consolation in loss from the secondary sense 'my affection for you'. At this point the poem ceases to address the friend in the second person.

10 **found** recovered

11 **and** is possibly the archaic form (corresponding to 'an') meaning 'if'.
both twain the one as well as the other. On the negative associations of *twain*, see 36.1 n.

12 **cross** (a) 'A trial or affliction viewed in its Christian aspect, to be borne for Christ's sake with Christian patience' (*OED* 10a); (b) 'annoyance; misfortune, adversity; sometimes (under the influence of the verb) anything that thwarts or crosses' (*OED* 10b). Cf. 34.12 n.

13 **are one** Compare the proverb 'A friend is one's second self' (Dent F696).

14 **Sweet flatt'ry** 'Gratifying deception, delusion' (Schmidt). *OED* cites only this passage and *Othello* 4.1.128 in this sense (2 *fig.*), which is forced from *flatt'ry* by the peculiar self-deceptions involved in jealous love. The unity of poet and friend, so elaborately argued for in 39, is now presented as delusion to which the poet must cling in order to preserve a semblance of contentment.

42

That thou hast her, it is not all my grief,
And yet it may be said I loved her dearly;
That she hath thee is of my wailing chief,
A loss in love that touches me more nearly.
Loving offenders, thus I will excuse ye:
Thou dost love her, because thou know'st I love her,
And for my sake even so doth she abuse me,
Suff'ring my friend for my sake to approve her.
If I lose thee, my loss is my love's gain;
And, losing her, my friend hath found that loss:
Both find each other, and I lose both twain,
And both for my sake lay on me this cross.
But here's the joy: my friend and I are one.
Sweet flatt'ry! Then she loves but me alone.

9–11 lose . . . losing . . . lose] Q (loose . . . loosing . . . loose)

The poem arches back across the preceding sonnets of separation and loss to recall the simpler absences brought about by travel in *28*. The group up to *48* deals in simpler antithetical concepts and more straightforward amorous relationships than *29–42*.

1 **wink** sleep (*OED* 3)

2 **unrespected** 'Unregarded, unnoticed' (*OED* 1), citing Griffin's *Fidessa* (1596) 37: 'Whilst I . . . do sit in heavy plight, | Wailing alone my unrespected love'. Possibly also 'of no importance'.

4 **darkly bright** able to see more clearly in the dark
bright in dark directed directed piercingly towards their object, although it is night

5 **whose shadow . . . bright** 'whose mere appearance in a dream can make darkness shine'. On *shadow* see *27*.10 n.

6–8 **How . . . so?** 'How delightfully would your real presence (with its far greater brightness) shine out in the day, when your imagined presence shines so brightly to eyes which are shut.' *Thy shadow's form* is the substance which gives rise to the imaginary resemblance.

11 **thy** Q reads 'their'. On this error, see *26*.12 n.
imperfect 'not fully real'; also, perhaps, given the concern of this part of the sequence with the failings of the friend, 'Positively faulty, vicious, evil' (*OED* 3)

12 **heavy** deep. The word is often associated with sleep, and can mean 'slow, sluggish, dull' (Schmidt, 5), 'weary, drowsy, sleepy' (Schmidt, 6).
stay remain with (although Schmidt proposes 'be in the same place as')

14 **show thee me** show you to me. The reverse reading is possible ('show me to you'), but nothing in the preceding poem encourages it.

43

When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see,
For all the day they view things unrespected,
But when I sleep, in dreams they look on thee,
And, darkly bright, are bright in dark directed.
Then thou, whose shadow shadows doth make bright,
How would thy shadow's form form happy show,
To the clear day with thy much clearer light,
When to unseeing eyes thy shade shines so?
How would (I say) mine eyes be blessèd made
By looking on thee in the living day,
When in dead night thy fair imperfect shade
Through heavy sleep on sightless eyes doth stay?
All days are nights to see till I see thee,
And nights bright days when dreams do show thee me.

11 thy] MALONE (*conj.* Capell); their Q

1 **dull** (a) 'insensible . . . senseless, inanimate' (*OED* 2a); (b) 'depressed' (*OED* 4), as in *Errors* 5.1.79–80: 'Sweet recreation barred, what doth ensue | But moody and dull melancholy?'

2 **Injurious** harmful; with a suggestion of 'malicious wrongdoing'
stop my way prevent my movement, bar my passage to you

4 **limits** distant regions
stay 'To reside or sojourn in a place for a longer or shorter period' (*OED* 8)

5 **No matter then** it would not matter if

7–8 **For . . . be** The speed of thought is proverbial (Dent T240). Compare the Chorus to *Henry V* 3. Pr. 1–3: 'Thus with imagined wing our swift scene flies | In motion of no less celerity | Than that of thought.'

9 **thought … thought** *Epanalepsis* (repetition of the same word at the beginning and end of a clause) combines with *antanaclasis* (repetition of a word in different senses) to create a deadlocked loop of thought.

11 **But that . . . wrought** 'However, being completely constituted of earth and water . . .'. The human body was thought to be composed of two heavy elements (earth and water) and two lighter and more nimble elements (air and fire). The relative balance of these elements varied with mood, health, personal constitution, season, and age. To be composed of *earth and water* is to be slow both physically and mentally. The Dauphin's horse (or Bourbon's horse in Oxford) illustrates the opposite qualities: 'It is a beast for Perseus. He is pure air and fire, and the dull elements of earth and water never appear in him, but only in patient stillness while his rider mounts him' (*Henry V* 3.7.20–3).

12 **attend time's leisure** wait on the whim of time, like a retainer awaiting the command of a lord

13 **Receiving . . . so slow** obtaining nothing from the slow and heavy elements of earth and water

14 **badges of either's woe** tokens of the woe of earth and water. In *2 Henry IV* 4.2.99–102 there is a hint that *badges* for Shakespeare at the end of the 1590s could mean 'physical manifestations of an inner balance of humours' as well as 'heraldic emblems': 'The second property of your excellent sherry is the warming of the blood, which, before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice'.

44

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,
Injurious distance should not stop my way;
For then, despite of space, I would be brought
From limits far remote, where thou dost stay.
No matter then although my foot did stand
Upon the farthest earth removed from thee,
For nimble thought can jump both sea and land
As soon as think the place where he would be.
But ah, thought kills me that I am not thought,
To leap large lengths of miles when thou art gone,
But that, so much of earth and water wrought,
I must attend time's leisure with my moan,
  Receiving naught by elements so slow
  But heavy tears, badges of either's woe.

13 naught] GILDON; naughts Q

1 **other two** i.e. the elements of air and fire
slight 'Lacking in solid or substantial qualities' (*OED* 3b)
purging purifying

3 **The first . . . desire** The identification of thought with air and love with fire is common.

4 **present-absent . . . slide** these are so volatile that they are not here at once. Cf. the 'absent presence' of Stella with which Sidney's Astrophil is left at the end of *Astrophil and Stella* (106.1).

5 **quicker** both 'more rapid' and 'more vital'. (Old age was believed to be accompanied by a diminution in air and fire in the body, which caused the system to slow down.)

6 **embassy** Early modern embassies tended to be missions to foreign rulers designed to achieve a particular point of policy such as a dynastic marriage or treaty (permanent resident ambassadors were beginning to emerge *c.*1600, as Shakespeare recognizes in *Measure* 3.1.54–6).

7 **being made of four** i.e. four elements. See *44*.11 n.

8 **melancholy** is traditionally associated with the element of earth, with old age, and with death. Three syllables here.

9 **life's composition** (a) the compound of elements which is necessary for life (*OED* 2); (b) life's 'combination of personal qualities that make any one what he is' (*OED* 16b). Q's reading 'liues composition' probably reflects contemporary pronunciation, in which a medial fricative could be voiced before a possessive (Partridge, 116).
recurèd made whole again, returned to a healthy balance.

10 **those swift messengers** i.e. air and fire.

12 **thy** Q reads 'their' which is just possible (referring to the new health of the elements), but is probably another 'their' for 'thy' error; on which see *26*.12 n.

14 **I send . . . sad** The ambassadors air and fire are sent off once more, which brings back a melancholy state. The couplet introduces the new suggestion that the poet is actually in control of when fire and air are sent on their embassies, rather than a passive victim of their wish to be with the friend.

45

The other two, slight air and purging fire,
Are both with thee, wherever I abide:
The first my thought, the other my desire,
These present-absent with sweet motion slide.
For when these quicker elements are gone
In tender embassy of love to thee,
My life, being made of four, with two alone
Sinks down to death, oppressed with melancholy,
Until life's composition be recurèd
By those swift messengers returned from thee,
Who even but now come back again assurèd
Of thy fair health, recounting it to me.
This told, I joy; but then, no longer glad,
I send them back again and straight grow sad.

5 For] Q; Forth *conj*. Tucker; So INGRAM AND REDPATH 9 recurèd] Q; recured BOSWELL 11 assurèd] Q; assured BOSWELL 12 thy] GILDON 1714; their Q

Debates between the eye and the heart are quite common in sonnet sequences: Drayton's *Idea* (1619) 33 begins: 'Whilst yet mine eyes do surfeit with delight, | My woeful heart, imprisoned in my breast, | Wisheth to be transformèd to my sight'; Watson's *Tears of Fancy* (1593) 20 begins: 'My heart accused mine eyes and was offended, | Vowing the cause was in mine eyes' aspiring'.

2 **conquest** See 6.14 n. The eye and heart plead their claim for the friend as in action for partition of a piece of property over which they both claim ownership.

3, 8, 13-14 **thy** Q reads 'their'. See 26.12 n.

3 **bar** prohibit, drawing on 'To arrest or stop (a person) by ground of legal objection from enforcing some claim' (*OED* 5 *Law* a)

4 **My heart . . . right** My heart wishes to deny my eye the liberty to see the friend's picture. To enjoy the *freedom of* something is to be granted specific rights to enjoy it (as when one is granted the freedom of a city or a guild).

5 **thou in . . . lie** i.e. that the friend's image resides in him

6 **closet** private inner chamber, or a small private chest; often used as a metaphor for private inner space. See *Lucrece* 1659 n.

9 **'cide** decide. This is the received modernization of Q's 'side', which could alternatively mean 'To assign to one of two sides or parties' (*OED* s.v. 'side' *v.* 5). Since *OED* cites only this passage the definition lacks firm support.

impanellèd the technical term for 'to enrol or constitute (a body of jurors)'

10 **quest** 'An official or judicial inquiry' (*OED* s.v. 'quest' *n.*[1] 1)

tenants 'One who holds a piece of land, a house, etc., by lease for a term of years or a set time' (*OED* 2). The *tenants to the heart* therefore temporarily hold their land from him, as from a superior, and so cannot be expected to be impartial.

12 **moiety** 'A half, one of two equal parts: a. in legal or quasi-legal use' (*OED* 1); but usually in Shakespeare 'one of two parts (not necessarily equal)' (*OED* 2a). A 'moiety' in this sense may be strikingly unequal to the other part, as when Hotspur complains in *1 Henry IV* 3.1.93–4: 'Methinks my moiety north from Burton here | In quantity equals not one of yours.' It can even shrink to the point of becoming 'a small part; a lesser share, portion, or quantity' (*OED* 2 b), as in the dedication to Lucrece l. 5. The jury of thoughts shows its bias by allocating the less valuable, outward part of the friend to the eye.

46

Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war
How to divide the conquest of thy sight.
Mine eye my heart thy picture's sight would bar;
My heart, mine eye the freedom of that right.
My heart doth plead that thou in him dost lie
(A closet never pierced with crystal eyes),
But the defendant doth that plea deny,
And says in him thy fair appearance lies.
To 'cide this title is impanellèd
A quest of thoughts, all tenants to the heart,
And by their verdict is determinèd
The clear eye's moiety, and the dear heart's part,
As thus: mine eye's due is thy outward part,
And my heart's right thy inward love of heart.

3, 8 thy] MALONE (*conj.* Capell); their Q 4 freedom] BENSON; freeedome Q 9 'cide] Q (side)
13, 14 thy] MALONE (*conj.* Capell); their Q; thine MALONE 1790

1 **a league is took** a treaty of alliance is established

2 **And each . . . other** Compare the proverb 'One good turn deserves another' (Dent T616).

4 **Or** or when
smother suffocate

5 **my eye** is an anomalous form, where one would expect 'mine eye'. It is used to retain symmetry with *my love's* earlier in the line and *my heart* in the next line. Compare *Lucrece* l. 1475.

6 **painted banquet** illusory feast, possibly alluding to the widely invoked tale of the artist Zeuxis who painted grapes so vividly that birds pecked vainly at them. Compare *Venus* ll. 601–2 and n.

8 **in . . . part** joins my heart in thinking of love

9–10 **So either . . . me** 'so either your picture or my love for you makes it as though you are present to me even when you are away'

10 **are** Q's reading is retained here. 'Are' rather than 'art' is sometimes used as the second-person-singular form of the verb 'to be' before consonants.

11–12 **For thou . . . thee** 'since you cannot go further than my thoughts, which are always accompanied by me, and which always follow you'

47

Betwixt mine eye and heart a league is took,
And each doth good turns now unto the other.
When that mine eye is famished for a look,
Or heart in love with sighs himself doth smother,
With my love's picture then my eye doth feast,
And to the painted banquet bids my heart.
Another time mine eye is my heart's guest,
And in his thoughts of love doth share a part.
So either by thy picture or my love,
Thyself away are present still with me;
For thou not farther than my thoughts canst move,
And I am still with them, and they with thee;
Or if they sleep, thy picture in my sight
Awakes my heart, to heart's and eye's delight.

10 self] Q (*Rosenbach copy only*); seife Q are] Q; art MALONE (*conj.* Capell) 11 not] BENSON; nor Q; no CAPELL

1 **took my way** set off on my journey
2 **bars** Like a miser, the poet locks away everything in a safe-room.
thrust 'To press (objects) into a confined space; also, to fill (a space) densely; to crowd, cram' (*OED* 3c)
4 **wards** either 'Guardianship, keeping, control' (*OED* 2a) or (as l. 9 implies) 'that which secures a door; a bolt' (Schmidt, 7). It is impossible here to separate physical security from dependable guardianship.
trust? Q's question mark is retained, although in early modern usage it could indicate an exclamation. This edition retains question marks at the end of rhetorical questions (as here), since such questions are very often subsequently assailed by the doubts which they seek emphatically to exclude (as happens in the next quatrain here). Exclamation marks are used sparingly, and only late on, in Q (*92*.12, *95*.4, *123*.1, *126*.10, *148*.1), and almost always to mark what are unequivocally exclamations ('No!' or 'O me!').
5 **to whom** (a) in comparison with whom; (b) for whom, in whose estimation
6 **grief** source of pain or anxiety
10 **Save . . . art** 'except where you are not in fact (though I think you are)'
11 **gentle closure** the lovingly mild confine. *Closure* means 'Bound, limit, circuit' (*OED* 1b), and can imply physical constriction, as it does in *Richard III* 3.3.10: 'Within the guilty closure of thy walls'. Compare *Venus* l. 782.
12 **come and part** come and go; although 'part' is often used in love poetry of the period to mean 'separate'
13 **even** On this emphatic disyllabic use of 'even', see *35*.5 n.
14 **For . . . dear** For even truth becomes a thief for so rich a reward. Compare *Venus* l. 724, and the proverb 'The prey entices the thief' (Dent P570).

48

How careful was I, when I took my way,
Each trifle under truest bars to thrust,
That to my use it might unusèd stay
From hands of falsehood, in sure wards of trust?
But thou, to whom my jewels trifles are,
Most worthy comfort, now my greatest grief,
Thou best of dearest, and mine only care,
Art left the prey of every vulgar thief.
Thee have I not locked up in any chest,
Save where thou art not, though I feel thou art,
Within the gentle closure of my breast,
From whence at pleasure thou mayst come and part;
And even thence thou wilt be stol'n, I fear:
For truth proves thievish for a prize so dear.

1 **Against that time** in preparation for that time. Cf. l. 9 below and n., and *63*.1 and n. That both this poem and *63* begin with an effort to resist the effects of time is significant: 49 (seven times seven) was a minor climacteric or point of crisis in the body's development; 63 (seven times nine) was the 'grand climacteric'. As G. B. Evans suggests, the poem seems out of place in a group which chiefly concerns travel; but its numerological appropriateness offsets that effect.

2 **defects** is accented on the second syllable

3 **Whenas** 'at the time when'; an archaism or poeticism by 1609

cast . . . sum 'calculated his final total'. *Cast* means 'To count or reckon, so as to ascertain the sum of various numbers, orig. by means of counters' (*OED* 37). An unlikely secondary sense is 'squandered his last penny', unlikely because it conflicts with *that audit* in the following line.

4 **Called . . . respects** 'summoned to that final calculation of debts by learned and respectable advisers'. *Advised respects*, however, leaves it deliberately uncertain as to whether the friend has been called to make an audit of his love by senior advisers or by his own sense of propriety (*OED* s.v. 'respect' 14a: 'a consideration; a fact or motive which assists in, or leads to, the formation of a decision; an end or aim'), so one could gloss 'by well-informed consideration'.

5 **strangely pass** 'pass by me like a stranger'. *Strangely* means 'In an unfriendly or unfavourable manner; with cold or distant bearing' (*OED* 2). Cf. *89*.8 and *110*.6.

7–8 **When love . . . gravity** 'When love, transformed from how it is now, shall present strong and severe arguments against knowing me'; or 'find reasons for a premature appearance of gravity'. *Settled* can convey the sense of 'having acquired maturity' in Shakespeare (*OED* 1b), as when Isabella describes Angelo in *Measure* 3.1.88–9 as one 'Whose *settled* visage and deliberate word | Nips youth i' th' head'.

9 **Against that time** in fearful anticipation of that time

ensconce 'To shelter within or behind a fortification' (*OED* 2). Cf. *Lucrece* l. 1515.

10 **Within . . . desert** inside the knowledge of my own merit. Q's 'desart' makes the rhyme with 'part' complete.

11 **uprear** 'raise up, elevate, erect' (*OED* 1), often used in military contexts. Here the poet's *hand* is presented as a loyal defender of the friend's *lawful reasons*, or just arguments.

13–14 **To leave . . . cause** 'You have the strength of law on the side of ceasing to love me, since I can present no legally binding reason why you should love.' The poet is again seen as pleading in a law court against his own interests, as in *35*.10 above.

49

Against that time (if ever that time come)
When I shall see thee frown on my defects,
Whenas thy love hath cast his utmost sum,
Called to that audit by advised respects;
Against that time when thou shalt strangely pass,
And scarcely greet me with that sun, thine eye,
When love, converted from the thing it was,
Shall reasons find of settled gravity;
Against that time do I ensconce me here,
Within the knowledge of mine own desert,
And this my hand against myself uprear
To guard the lawful reasons on thy part.
To leave poor me thou hast the strength of laws,
Since why to love I can allege no cause.

1 **heavy** adverbial, meaning 'slowly, sluggishly; laboriously' (*OED* 2). It also may reflect the character of the horse which bears the poet. Horses were believed, like all living things, to have an individual temperament based on the relative dominance of the four humours in their bodies: as Thomas Blundeville puts it, 'And if the earth have sovereignty [in the temperament of a horse], then he is black of colour, or a mouse dun, and therewith fearful, faint-hearted, dull and heavy', *The Order of Dieting Horses* (1593), fo. 3[a]. The ideal horse is hot, moist, and dominated by the humour of blood.

2–4 **When . . . friend** when the only rest and repose which my destination offers me after my laborious journey is the thought that each mile I have travelled has taken me further from my friend (which is no rest at all)

2 **travel's** Q's 'trauels' excludes the otherwise frequent pun on 'travail' or labour

4 '**Thus . . . friend**' Q does not use inverted commas to mark direct speech.

5 **tirèd** (a) exhausted; (b) attired. The description could suit either horse or rider.

6 **dully** Q's 'duly' is best modernized in this way, given that 'dull' was a semi-technical term for the temperament of a horse in the period. See note to l. 1 above, and compare *dull bearer* in 51.2.

7 **instinct** stressed on the second syllable

8 **being made . . . thee** since it was being made away from you

10 **That** which; i.e. the *bloody spur*

11 **heavily** sadly. Cf. l. 1.

12 **sharp** painful; also conveying the physical pain inflicted by the *sharp* spurs

14 **my joy** (a) my happiness; (b) the cause of my joy, i.e. the friend

50

How heavy do I journey on the way,
When what I seek (my weary travel's end)
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say
'Thus far the miles are measured from thy friend.'
The beast that bears me, tirèd with my woe,
Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,
As if by some instinct the wretch did know
His rider loved not speed being made from thee.
The bloody spur cannot provoke him on
That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide,
Which heavily he answers with a groan
More sharp to me than spurring to his side,
For that same groan doth put this in my mind:
My grief lies onward, and my joy behind.

4 'Thus . . . friend.'] MALONE (*italic*); ^~ . . . ~.^ Q 6 dully] Q (duly)

1 **slow offence** offence of slowness
2 **dull bearer** the horse described in *50*. See note to *50*.1
3–4 **'From . . . need'** The editorial tradition here slavishly follows Malone and does not mark these lines as direct speech. Consistency with *51*.4 demands that they should be.
4 **posting** 'Speedy travelling: hastening, haste, hurry' (*OED* 2)
5–6 **O . . . slow** 'What excuse for his slowness will my horse give on the return journey when the fastest possible speed will seem slow?' *Swift extremity* means 'extreme swiftness'.
7 **though** even if I were
8 **In wingèd . . . know** even travelling at the speed of the wind I shall feel as if I am not moving
10 **perfect'st** Q represents the superlative form metaplasmically as 'perfects'. The modernization creates an awkward-sounding line which it is likely the poet deliberately avoided.
11 **Shall weigh** take no account of. Q's 'Shall naigh' is a notorious crux. It can be glossed if the punctuation is emended to make 'no dull flesh' into a parenthesis: 'desire—no dull flesh but an impulse of the spirit—will neigh like a carnal horse as an expression of sexual impatience'. The association of the passions with horses goes back to Plato's *Phaedrus*. See *Venus* ll. 259–324 n. Some commentators see it as a paradox worthy of the Sonnets that desire in seeking to transcend its carnal vehicle ('no dull flesh') should become at that very moment carnal and horse-like by neighing with delight. Others see it as nonsense. Stanley Wells, 'New Readings in Shakespeare's Sonnets', in J. P. Vander Motten, ed., *Elizabethan and Modern Studies* (Ghent, 1985), 320, argues for Taylor's 'shall reign' (i.e. rein), an emendation which supposes simple minim error from the compositor. Since the flesh is *dull* the poet will have no need to rein it in. MacDonald P. Jackson, 'How Many Horses has Sonnet 51? Textual and Literary Criticism in Shakespeare's Sonnets', *English Language Notes* 27/3 (1990), 10–19 argues for 'waigh' (weigh), as Bray had earlier done. This requires of compositor B, the less reliable of Q's two compositors, a simple minim error combined with an over-sensitivity to the horsey flavour of the sonnet. Jackson's reading requires no additional alteration to Q's punctuation in order to mean 'desire shall weigh (i.e. take account of) no dull flesh such as his horse in his progress to his friend'. Cf. *108*.10. 'Weigh' has the heaviness which Shakespeare elsewhere associates with flesh, and Hand D in *Sir Thomas More* (probably that of Shakespeare) also uses the form 'waigh'. Jackson's strong case is marred only by his claim that 'naigh' is not an accepted spelling of 'neigh' in this period. Joshua Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas's *Divine Weekes and Workes*, The First Part of the Third Day of the Second Week (1606), ll. 1143–4 reads: 'For, those that first these two bright Starrs survaide | Wilde Stalion-like, after their bewties naigh'd', ed. Susan Snyder, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1979). 'Weigh' is none the less the most convincing solution to the crux.
11 **dull . . . race** No mortal flesh will impede his heated flight. If Q's 'neigh' is accepted in l. 11 the phrase could also mean 'there is no heavy flesh in his fiery bloodline'. Horses dominated by choler and the element of fire were believed to be the ideal short sprinters, since they were 'hot and fiery, and seldom of any great strength', Blundeville, *The Order of Dieting Horses*, fo. 3^{r}.
12 **love** affection; possibly also Cupid
jade nag
13–14 **'Since . . . go'** 'Since he left you with a resistant slowness, I will charge back to you, and allow him free rein.' *Run* here means 'To ride on horseback at a quick pace' (*OED* 6a). The poet, *mounted on the wind*, probably does not propose to race his horse home, but allows this potentially absurd image to emerge in order to bear witness to his eagerness. These lines are not traditionally marked as direct speech, but consistency requires that they should be.

51

Thus can my love excuse the slow offence
Of my dull bearer, when from thee I speed:
'From where thou art, why should I haste me thence?
Till I return, of posting is no need.'
O what excuse will my poor beast then find
When swift extremity can seem but slow?
Then should I spur, though mounted on the wind:
In wingèd speed no motion shall I know.
Then can no horse with my desire keep pace;
Therefore desire (of perfect'st love being made)
Shall weigh no dull flesh in his fiery race,
But love, for love, thus shall excuse my jade:
'Since from thee going he went wilful slow,
Towards thee I'll run, and give him leave to go.'

3–4 'From . . . need.'] This edition; ‸~ . . . ~.‸ Q 10 perfect'st] DYCE 1857; perfects Q; perfect GILDON 11 weigh] BRAY (*conj.* G. C. M. Smith); naigh Q; raign OXFORD (*conj.* Taylor) 13–14 'Since . . . go.'] DOWDEN; ‸~ . . . ~.‸ Q

1 **So am I** I am just like
blessèd 'Bringing, or accompanied by, blessing or happiness' (*OED* 4a)

4 **For** for fear of
seldom pleasure a pleasure which is stronger for being infrequently enjoyed. Compare the proverb 'A seldom use of pleasures maketh the same the more pleasant' (Dent P417).

5 **feasts** carries more religious associations than it does now: 'religious anniversaries' (*OED* 1), rather than 'sumptuous meals' (*OED* 2). The sonnet echoes Prince Harry's soliloquy in *1 Henry IV* 1.2.201–4: 'If all the year were playing holidays, | To sport would be as tedious as to work; | But when they seldom come, they wished-for come, | And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.' He goes on to compare his future reformation to a jewel which glitters more brightly for having a foil to highlight its brilliance.
rare (a) infrequent; (b) valuable

7 **thinly placèd** sparsely distributed

8 **captain jewels . . . carcanet** 'principal jewels in a necklace or coronet'

9–11 **So is . . . blest** 'So the time that keeps you from me is like a chest or wardrobe which conceals a rich garment in order that the day on which it is removed will be truly special.' There is a pun on *keeps*, meaning both 'delays' and 'retains securely': although time delays (*keeps*) the friend it does not *keep* him locked away safely in the poet's chest. The pun attempts to turn a forced separation into a willed moderation of contact, and the strain of this wishful thinking shows all too clearly.

12 **unfolding** develops the simile of the wardrobe, and means both 'To open or unwrap the folds of' (*OED* 1), and 'to display' (*OED* 3).
imprisoned pride means 'concealed prize possession'. A 'wardrobe' in this period is a room set apart specifically for the storage of rich clothes or armour; hence the whole sonnet depends on the poet's imagining himself having the accoutrements of the *rich*.

13–14 **Blessèd . . . hope** 'You are blessed because you are of such worth that to have you is to triumph, and not to have you is to long for you.'

52

So am I as the rich, whose blessèd key
Can bring him to his sweet up-lockèd treasure,
The which he will not ev'ry hour survey
For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.
Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
Since, seldom coming, in the long year set
Like stones of worth they thinly placèd are,
Or captain jewels in the carcanet.
So is the time that keeps you as my chest,
Or as the wardrobe which the robe doth hide
To make some special instant special blest,
By new unfolding his imprisoned pride.
Blessèd are you whose worthiness gives scope,
Being had, to triumph; being lacked, to hope.

2 **strange shadows** could be (a) attendants ('parasite, toady' (*OED* 8)); (b) supernatural presences; (c) representations or images of the friend. The sonnet moves between senses (a) and (b) in its first quatrain, and settles on sense (c) by l. 10.
tend wait upon you as attendant or servant (*OED* 4a)

3–4 **Since . . . lend** 'All people have only one reflected image, but you, although you are a single being, can adopt the appearance of anyone.' *Every one* could alternatively be modernized as 'everyone'.

5–6 **Describe . . . you** 'the verbal representation of Adonis is simply a poor imitation of you'. *Counterfeit* means 'imitation, forgery' (*OED* 1). This section of the poem has close parallels with Orlando's poem on Rosalind in *As You Like It* 3.2.141–9: 'Nature presently distilled | Helen's cheek, but not her heart, | Cleopatra's majesty, | Atalanta's better part, | Sad Lucretia's modesty. | Thus Rosalind of many parts | By heavenly synod was devised | Of many faces, eyes, and hearts | To have the touches dearest prized'. Compare also Richard Barnfield's *Cynthia* (1595), Sonnet 17, a poem of high erotic charge about a male subject: 'Cherry-lipped Adonis in his snowy shape, | Might not compare with his pure ivory white'.

7–8 **On Helen's . . . new** 'Add all the arts of beautification to the already beautiful face of Helen of Troy, and she will represent you, dressed afresh in Greek costume.' *Painted new* means both (neutrally) 'represented afresh' and (with a slight pejorative edge) 'newly made up'. Adonis was a reluctant lover, and the abduction of Helen of Troy caused the Trojan war: neither are happy precedents for love.

9 **foison** 'Plentiful crop or harvest' (*OED* 1b)

10 **The one . . . show** 'the spring is merely an image of your beauty'

11 **The other . . . appear** 'the bountiful harvest seems like your generosity'

12 **know** recognize

13–14 **In all . . . heart** (a) 'You are represented in every outward beauty; but you are like none, and none are like you, for constancy in love'; (b) 'You have share in every form of noble elegance that there is, but you are unparalleled for constancy'; (c) 'You are as lovely as can be, but you do not admire anyone for their constancy, nor does anyone admire you for your constancy'. *Grace* ranges from 'external beauty', through 'elegant refinement of manner (connoting aristocratic ease)', to 'willingness to grant favours'. *Like* functions as an adjective, but also possibly as verb.

53

What is your substance, whereof are you made,
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?
Since every one hath, every one, one shade,
And you, but one, can every shadow lend.
Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit
Is poorly imitated after you.
On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set,
And you in Grecian tires are painted new.
Speak of the spring and foison of the year,
The one doth shadow of your beauty show,
The other as your bounty doth appear,
And you in every blessèd shape we know.
In all external grace you have some part,
But you like none, none you, for constant heart.

2 **By** as a result of
truth fidelity
3 **deem** consider, judge
5 **canker-blooms** the (scentless) dog-roses; or just possibly *OED* 5b: 'A local name for the common wild poppy'. See Katherine Duncan-Jones, 'Deep-dyed Canker Blooms: Botanical Reference in Shakespeare's Sonnet 54', *RES* 46 (1995), 521–5. Poppies are richly coloured (as dog-roses are not) but lack scent. In these respects they would suit the context; but it is hard to believe Shakespeare thought poppies *hang on such thorns*, and this sense of *canker* was found chiefly in East Anglia.
dye colour. Both this and *tincture* impose on the world of nature the threat of artificial colouring, which anticipates the transformation of natural rose to man-made perfume in l. 12.
6 **tincture** 'Hue, colour: esp. as communicated (naturally or artificially) by a colouring matter or dye, or by something that stains; a tinge, tint' (*OED* 2a)
7 **Hang on such thorns** Dog-roses are suspended above thorns similar to those of cultivated roses.
wantonly 'Frolicsomely, sportively' (*OED* 1b); a rebuke to the friend may be teased out of 'Lewdly, lasciviously; voluptuously' (*OED* 1a)
8 **maskèd** concealed. The petals of unopened rosebuds are concealed beneath a whorl of leaf-like calyxes.
9 **But, for . . . show** but since the sole value of dog-roses lies in their appearance (rather than also in their sweet smell)
11–12 **Sweet roses . . . made** Cultivated roses with a rich scent do not just die; their sweet-smelling dead blooms are made into sweetest perfumes.
13 **And so of you** and the same is true of you
14 **When that shall . . . truth** 'When your beauty shall pass away my verse will preserve the essence of your truthfulness (as a parfumier preserves the scent of a rose).' *Vade* is often used as a variant form of *fade* in this period. It is retained here since it marks a shift from *fade* ('lose colour') in l. 10 above towards the stronger sense 'lose vitality' (*OED* 3), exploiting the derivation of *vade* from the Latin 'vadere', to go, pass away.
14 **by verse** Capell's emendation to 'my verse' is attractive, since *OED* cites only transitive uses of 'distils'. Q's reading, however, implies that the friend's truth has a sufficient potency to distil itself into poetry without the assistance of the poet; as such it is a more gracious piece of flattery. 'My verse', however, would anticipate the confidence of the following poem.

54

O how much more doth beauty beauteous seem
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give.
The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye
As the perfumèd tincture of the roses,
Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly
When summer's breath their maskèd buds discloses;
But, for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwooed, and unrespected fade,
Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so;
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made:
  And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth:
  When that shall vade, by verse distils your truth.

14 vade] Q; fade GILDON by] Q; my MALONE (*conj.* Capell)

1–2 **Not marble . . . rhyme** Horace, *Odes* 3.30.1–9 and *Met.* 15.871–9 are the chief precedents for this confident affirmation of the power of verse to immortalize. Golding 15.983–95: 'Now have I brought a work to end which neither Jove's fierce wrath, | Nor sword, nor fire, nor fretting age with all the force it hath | Are able to abolish quite. Let come that fatal hour | Which (saving of this brittle flesh) hath over me no power, | And at his pleasure make an end of mine uncertain time. | Yet shall the better part of me assurèd be to climb | Aloft above the starry sky. And all the world shall never | Be able for to quench my name. For look how far so ever | The Roman Empire by the right of conquest shall extend, | So far shall all folk read this work. And time without all end | (If poets as by prophecy about the truth may aim) | My life shall everlastingly be lengthened still by fame'. This poem differs from its predecessors in two respects: (a) The poet immortalizes not himself, as Horace and Ovid do, but the friend, whose literary afterlife gives him enough vitality to *pace forth* (l. 10); (b) Horace and Ovid both make the life of their verse coextensive with the sway of the Roman Empire in time and space; Shakespeare promises endurance in all lands (*all posterity*, l. 11) until Judgement Day (the *ending doom*, l. 12). This poem also notably fails to record any of the friend's achievements or actions. It is the poem's tenacity of remembrance rather than the deeds of the friend which is celebrated.

1 **monuments** 'A monument is a thing erected, made or written, for a memorial of some remarkable action, fit to be transferred to future posterities. And thus generally taken, all religious Foundations, all sumptuous and magnificent structures, Cities, Towns, Towers, Castles, Pillars, Pyramids, Crosses, Obelisks, Amphitheatres, Statues and the like, as well as Tombs and Sepulchres, are called Monuments', John Weever, *Ancient Funerall Monuments* (1631), 1.

2 **pow'rful** Q marks this as disyllabic by spelling it 'powrefull'. 'Power' is usually monosyllabic and usually spelt 'powre' in Q. The only exception is 65.2, when 'power' rhymes with 'flower' in what may be a feminine rhyme.

3 **contents** 'The sum or substance of what is contained in a document; tenor, purport'; hence 'in the matter of these poems' (*OED* 3a); here, as normally before the nineteenth century, accented 'contènt'.

4 **besmeared with sluttish time** Most editors gloss 'dirtied over by the filthy servant time', in which *sluttish* is taken to mean 'Of persons: Dirty and untidy in dress and habits' (*OED* 1). 'Besmeared *with*', however, indicates that time is not the agent causing the dirt to spread on the monument, but that it is the substance with which it is besmeared (DuBellay's poems on the *Antiquitez de Rome* frequently refer to the 'poudreuse cendre' (1.1), the dusty cinders, which obscure the lineaments of ancient Rome). *Sluttish* therefore probably means 'Of things: Unclean, dirty, grimy; untidy' (*OED* 2). Compare *Lucrece* ll. 945 and 1381.

6 **broils** tumults; esp. in Shakespeare civil war or internal disturbance
work of masonry stone structures which are the products of a stonemason's labour

7 **Mars his sword** the sword of Mars, god of war
quick rapid; also, perhaps with a deliberate paradox, 'alive'

8 **record** (stressed on the first syllable) is usually a written report in the Sonnets, as at 59.5 and *123*.11.

9 **all oblivious enmity** 'all hostilities which destroy records of antiquity'. Wars cause the decay of monuments and therefore bring about oblivion of the past. For the usage of *oblivious* to mean 'bringing about oblivion' see *Macbeth* 5.3.43–7: 'Raze out the written troubles of the brain, | And with some sweet oblivious antidote | Cleanse the fraught bosom of that perilous stuff | Which weighs upon the heart'. Ingram and Redpath's conjecture 'oblivion's enmity' misses this idiosyncratic usage. Many editors hyphenate *all-oblivious-enmity*, which hardens the sense unnecessarily towards 'hostility which destroys everything', and excludes 'all forms of hostility which generate oblivion'.

10 **pace forth** stride out with the measured confidence of a warrior
find room gain admittance

11 **eyes of** opinion of
posterity See 6.12 n.

12 **ending doom** apocalypse; end of the world

13 **the judgement . . . arise** the Last Judgement, in which you will be resurrected in your own body

14 **this** this poem

55

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes shall outlive this pow'rful rhyme,
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone besmeared with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword, nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death, and all oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth, your praise shall still find room,
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgement that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

1 monuments] MALONE; monument Q 9 all oblivious] Q; all-oblivious MALONE; all oblivion's *conj*. Ingram and Redpath

14 **dwell** in this period has strong connotations of permanence (e.g. Jonson's appeal to God in 'To Heaven', l. 15: 'Dwell, dwell here still'); so 'live for ever'.

14 **lovers'** Q's 'louers' allows for either 'lover's' (meaning 'my own') or 'lovers' ' (many of them).

1 **love** could be the friend, or the poet's own fading passion, or Cupid. By its repetition in l. 5 it is more likely to be an address to the friend.

2 **blunter** Appetites are still said to be 'keen' and to need 'whetting', which preserves a metaphorical association between the strength of desire and the sharpness of a knife which was widespread *c.*1600.

3–4 **Which but . . . might** 'which was only today satisfied by feeding, but which tomorrow will return to its previous intensity'

6 **wink with fullness** 'loll shut with feeding', suggesting the eyes themselves are glutted

8 **dullness** (a) 'Gloominess of mind or spirits: now esp. as arising from want of interest' (*OED* 3); (b) bluntness; (c) the word can be used of appetite, so 'with a perpetual lack of hunger'

9 **Let** imagine that, let us suppose that. The sestet here confesses that the poem does not address simply the effects of excessive love and the consequent dulling of appetite, but actual separation. See *52* for a similar attempt to turn separation into a means of reinforcing love.

9 **int'rim** 'period between our meetings' (with a spatial sense: 'gap between us'); also used of a period of separation between lovers in Desdemona's 'And I a heavy interim shall support | By his dear absence', *Othello* 1.3.258–9. The word is italicized in Q, which indicates the compositor regarded it as a strange importation.

10 **contracted new** recently engaged to be married; possibly even 'married'

12 **Return of love** is elliptical for 'the return of the one they love'. It may also mean 'reciprocation of love', especially given that the poem urges renewed keenness in love on the friend.

13 **Or** 'or else call this interim a winter, which makes the summer more delightful by variety'. Q reads 'As', which is defended by Sisson, i.212. He glosses 'As (who should) call it winter'.

56

Sweet love, renew thy force. Be it not said
Thy edge should blunter be than appetite,
Which but today by feeding is allayed,
Tomorrow sharpened in his former might.
So love be thou, although today thou fill
Thy hungry eyes, even till they wink with fullness,
Tomorrow see again, and do not kill
The spirit of love with a perpetual dullness.
Let this sad int'rim like the ocean be,
Which parts the shore where two, contracted new,
Come daily to the banks, that when they see
Return of love, more blest may be the view;
Or call it winter, which being full of care,
Makes summer's welcome thrice more wished, more rare.

13 Or] MALONE (*conj.* Capell); As Q; Else PALGRAVE

1 **tend** attend like a servant. See 53.2 n.
2 **hours and times of your desire** (a) the hours when you require my services; (b) the moment-by-moment fluctuations of your whims; possibly also (c) the times when you arbitrarily decide to desire my presence as a lover
3 **precious . . . spend** implies that the poet's time is worthless unless it is 'spent' serving the friend.
4 **require** (a) order; (b) wish
5 **world-without-end hour** endless (alluding to the doxology 'As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end')
6 **watch the clock** stare at the clock, urging its hands to move; also 'stay awake around the clock'
7–8 **Nor think . . . adieu** both tonally flat ('I do not find separation objectionable when we have parted'), devoted ('I can't even think of our separation with bitterness since you have imposed it'), and ironic: 'Nor do I think that absence is unpleasant provided that you have at least bothered to say goodbye to your humble servant'.
9 **question with** 'To ask questions of; to hold discourse or conversation with; to dispute with' (OED 2)
10 **your affairs suppose** 'imagine what business you are doing'. *Affairs* is more likely to have suggested 'business matters' than 'love affairs' to a contemporary reader, but the context presses it towards amours.
12 **Save . . . those** 'except how happy you make those who are with you'
13 **true** both 'faithful' and 'absolute'. The couplet draws back to view the folly of the relationship in the third person, and in doing so draws out the rueful and reproachful undercurrents of the quatrains.
13–14 **that . . . anything** (a) 'that although you do anything which your power enables you to do'; (b) 'that he thinks there is no evil in your will whatever you do'. *Will* means (a) power; (b) power of volition; (c) (as often in Shakespeare) 'sexual licence'. Q capitalizes 'Will', which may indicate a pun on the male or female sexual organs, as well as anticipating the play on the poet's name in e.g. *136*.

57

Being your slave, what should I do but tend
Upon the hours and times of your desire?
I have no precious time at all to spend,
Nor services to do, till you require.
Nor dare I chide the world-without-end hour
Whilst I (my sovereign) watch the clock for you,
Nor think the bitterness of absence sour
When you have bid your servant once adieu.
Nor dare I question with my jealous thought
Where you may be, or your affairs suppose,
But like a sad slave stay and think of naught,
Save where you are how happy you make those.
So true a fool is love, that in your will,
Though you do anything, he thinks no ill.

13 will] Q (*Will*)

1 **That god** Love, or possibly Cupid

2 **in thought . . . pleasure** 'that I should even in imagination seek to regulate your times for recreation (or possibly sexual enjoyment)'. *Control* can mean both 'regulate' and *OED* 1. *trans.*, 'To check or verify, and hence to regulate (payments, receipts, or accounts generally)'. This anticipates *th'account of hours*.

3 **crave** By *c.*1600 this word is usually used by an inferior begging a favour from a superior, but can also mean 'To long or yearn for, to desire earnestly' (*OED* 5). It therefore expresses both the poet's sense of subordination, and his insubordinate desire.

4 **vassal** feudal servant
bound could imply an informal obligation, or that the poet is actually the bondsman of the lover.
stay await

5 **at your beck** 'absolutely subject to your control'. *Beck* means 'The slightest indication of will or command' (*OED* 2).

6 **imprisoned absence** 'liberty' for the friend is imprisoning for the poet

7 **patience-tame to sufferance** trained to patient endurance of hardships. *Sufferance* means both 'suffering' (*OED* 4) and 'Patient endurance, forbearance, long-suffering' (*OED* 1). Both senses need to be in play: the suffering referred to in l. 5 does not vanish with the acquisition of the virtue of patient endurance; rather it is physically registered within the word '*suffer*ance'. Q's punctuation diminishes this effect: 'patience tame, to sufferance bide each check' creates a near-tautology. If 'patience tame' is taken as a compound adjective (frequently unhyphenated in Q) then 'sufferance' must mean 'patient endurance': 'Let me, tame as patience itself, endure to the point of patient endurance, every unresponsive coldness'. This neutralizes the pain implicit in *sufferance*. Some editors punctuate 'And patience, tame to . . .' (i.e. 'and let patience, inured to hardship . . .'). This introduces an additional grammatical subject which diminishes the intensive focus on 'I' and 'you' in the sonnet, and also allows the poem to drift into abstraction at its centre.

7 **bide each check** endure each rebuff

8 **injury** carries more of a legal (and etymologically exact) sense than a physical: 'wrongdoing, illegality', more than 'causing pain'.

9 **where you list** wherever you like. Q's *where* may represent a contracted form of 'wherever'.
charter (a) 'A written document delivered by the sovereign or legislature: a. granting privileges to, or recognizing rights of, the people, or of certain classes or individuals' (*OED* 1); hence (as usually in Shakespeare) (b) 'Privilege; immunity; publicly conceded right' (*OED* 3). The authority imputed to the friend extends as the sonnet progresses, until he becomes an absolute law-giver.

10–11 **privilege . . . will** grant your own time a special freedom to do exactly what it likes

12 **Yourself . . . crime** both 'to pardon yourself for crimes which you have committed', and 'to pardon yourself for crimes which you commit against yourself'

13 **I am to wait** I have to wait, in the sense 'defer one's departure until something happens' (*OED* 7), and 'To be in readiness to receive orders; hence, to be in attendance as a servant' (*OED* 9a)

14 **Not blame . . . well** (a) 'Not to criticize your wishes and commands, be they good or bad' (in which *pleasure* is neutralized of all pejorative sense via its usual usage in Shakespeare to describe what a superior wishes of a servant); (b) 'Not to condemn your (sexual) freedoms be they good or bad' (in which *pleasure* becomes viciously charged). The 'hell/well' rhyme produces a sinister half-rhyme with the couplet of the previous sonnet.

58

That god forbid, that made me first your slave,
I should in thought control your times of pleasure,
Or at your hand th' account of hours to crave,
Being your vassal bound to stay your leisure.
O let me suffer (being at your beck)
Th' imprisoned absence of your liberty,
And, patience-tame to sufferance, bide each check
Without accusing you of injury.
Be where you list, your charter is so strong
That you yourself may privilege your time
To what you will: to you it doth belong
Yourself to pardon of self-doing crime.
I am to wait, though waiting so be hell,
Not blame your pleasure be it ill or well.

7 patience-tame] INGRAM AND REDPATH; ~^~, Q; ~,~^ GILDON 1714; ~^~^ CAPELL 10–11 time | To] Q; time: | DO MALONE

1 **nothing new** This sonnet engages with a widespread debate in the Renaissance as to whether time proceeded circularly, and so periodically revived past customs and past political systems, or in a linear manner which allowed for innovatory departures from the ancient world. It is influenced by the discourse of Pythagoras in *Met.* 15.75–478, which presents the universe as a grand process of flux. Ecclesiastes 1: 9–10 provides biblical precedent for a belief that all things recur: 'What is it that hath been? that that shall be: and what is it that hath been done? that which shall be done: and there *is* no new thing under the sun.' Compare the defence of new inventions found in Louis Le Roy, *Of the Interchangeable Course or Variety of Things*, trans. R[obert] A[shley] (1594): 'Is it not then an abusing of study, and of learning, to dwell continually among the ancients, and not to endeavour to bring forth new inventions, agreeable to the manners and affairs of this time?' (128^{v}).

3 **invention** See *38*.8 n. Cf. Le Roy, 129^{v}: 'So must learning also be provided for, by seeking of new inventions, instead of those that are lost, by changing what is not well.'

4 **The second . . . child?** 'bring to birth a literary production which has already been produced by another writer'. Associations between childbirth and writing are common in the late sixteenth century, as when Samuel Daniel cries, 'Go, wailing verse, the infants of my love, | Minerva-like brought forth without a mother', *Delia* (1592) 2.1–2.

5 **record** is stressed on the second syllable. Here, as usually in the Sonnets, written records are meant. See 55.8.

8 **Since mind . . . done** 'since the first time human experiences were recorded in writing'. *Mind* is probably used here with an archaic flavour to mean 'memory' (*OED* 1), a sense which Shakespeare otherwise only uses in phrases such as 'to have in mind'.

10 **composèd wonder . . . frame** this harmoniously constructed miracle of your form. *Composèd* may pun on the idea of the friend's body as a literary composition. *Frame* too is often used of both the human body and poetic artefacts, as in 'Now ginnes that goodly frame of Temperaunce | Fayrely to rise', *FQ* 2.12.1.

11 **mended** improved, set to rights

12 **revolution be the same** the cyclical recurrence of events and the heavenly bodies has returned us to exactly the same state as before

14 **subjects worse** (a) inferior topics; (b) inferior people. The meiosis, or deliberate diminution of the poet's object of praise, gives a double twist to the poem: the friend is praised for his singular eminence over ancient examples, but *worse* revives the suspicion of the poetry of praise aired in *35* and hints at 'they were even worse than you'.

59

If there be nothing new, but that which is
Hath been before, how are our brains beguiled,
Which, labouring for invention, bear amiss
The second burden of a former child?
O that record could with a backward look,
Even of five hundred courses of the sun,
Show me your image in some antique book,
Since mind at first in character was done,
That I might see what the old world could say
To this composèd wonder of your frame;
Whether we are mended, or whe'er better they,
Or whether revolution be the same.
O, sure I am the wits of former days
To subjects worse have given admiring praise.

11 whe'er] Q (where)

The sixtieth sonnet is concerned with the passage of minutes. Spenser's *Amoretti* 60 is also rich in references to the passage of the years. See René Graziani, 'The Numbering of Shakespeare's Sonnets: 12, 60, and 126', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 35 (1984), 79–82. It is indebted to *Met.* 15.178–85; Golding (15.197–206): 'In all the world there is not that that standeth at a stay. | Things ebb and flow: and every shape is made to pass away. | The time itself continually is fleeting like a brook. | For neither brook nor lightsome time can tarry still. But look | As every wave drives other forth, and that that comes behind | Both thrusteth and is thrust itself: Even so the times by kind | Do fly and follow both at once, and evermore renew. | For that that was before is left, and straight there doth ensue | Another that was never erst. Each twinkling of an eye | Doth change'.

1 **Like as** just as
towards is monosyllabic.

2 **minutes** Q's 'minuites' may deliberately evoke both 'minutes' and, via the French 'minuit', 'midnights'.
end plays on 'goal' and 'death', as though the minutes are eager to die.

4 **sequent** 'forming an unbroken series or course; consecutive' (*OED* 3b: earliest citation). The usage also anticipates *OED* 3a: 'Following one another in succession or in a series; successive'. Shakespeare is importing 'sequuntur' from Ovid's Latin, *Met.* 15.183 ('tempora sic fugiunt pariter pariterque sequuntur'). See Introduction, pp. 112–14.
contend The sense 'To strive in rivalry with another, for an object; to compete, vie' (*OED* 4) is first recorded in 1589.

5 **Nativity** the newborn child. The astrological sense ('Birth considered astrologically; a horoscope' (*OED* 4)) is also present, anticipating the *crookèd eclipses* later in the poem.

5 **main of light** expanse of light. First citation of 'main' in the sense 'a broad expanse' (*OED* 5b); also 'The high sea, the open ocean' (*OED* 5a), a sense activated by the *waves* of l. 1.

7 **Crookèd eclipses** malign astrological conjunctions

8 **confound** ruin, destroy

9 **transfix the flourish set on youth** 'destroy the ornament of beauty which belongs to youth'. It is difficult to say exactly how the phrase means this. *Transfix* is said by Schmidt to mean 'remove', but he cites only this instance. All other instances imply stabbing, either literally or metaphorically. Shakespeare is probably extending its physical and metaphorical sense, 'To pierce through (esp. with pain, grief, or other emotion)' (*OED* 1b *fig.*), in order to anticipate *delves*: Time subjects youth to such violent pangs of emotion, and to such physical shocks, that its bloom passes away. *Flourish* means both 'vital liveliness' and 'beautiful ornament'. The senses run through *OED* 1, 'the blossom or mass of flowers on a fruit-tree', to 2b *fig.*, 'prosperity, vigour; the "bloom" (of youth)', and thence to 3: 'Ostentatious embellishment; gloss, varnish'.

10 **delves the parallels** The lines on the brow are imagined as being parallel to each other, like furrows ploughed into the earth.

11 **Feeds on . . . truth** feeds on the delicacies produced by the constant perfection of nature

12 **but** except

13 **in hope** which only exist in my hopeful anticipation
stand echoes, anxiously perhaps, *nothing stands* in the previous line (a figure of repetition called *ploce*), striving to give verse a monumental immobility which can counter the inevitability of destruction. That it then rhymes with the *cruel hand* of time suggests that the couplet is aware of how fragile its optimism is.

60

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end,
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crowned
Crookèd eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth,
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow.
And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

2 minutes] Q (minuites)

1 **will** wish, often with overtones of sexual desire. The association of the word with the commands of a superior to an inferior (as in 'What's thy will, Sir?') grows as the poet metamorphoses into the addressee's *watchman* in l. 12.
image mental picture
4 **shadows** both 'patches of shade which appear to look like you' and 'mental images', or even 'ghosts', which anticipates the *spirit* in l. 5.
mock my sight 'make me wrongly believe that you are there, and so taunt me'
5 **spirit** ghostly presence
7 **shames** shameful actions
8 **scope and tenure** (a) the focus and object; (b) the legal domain controlled by your jealousy. Most editors modernize Q's 'tenure' as 'tenor', since the two were alternative forms *c.*1600 (as is indicated by *Lucrece* l. 1310 and textual notes). However, 'tenure' has the sense of 'property which falls within the jurisdiction of a governor' and therefore meshes with the Sonnets' recurrent interest in the nature and extent of the friend's legal control over the poet. So 'You pry into my deeds in order to find out my shameful actions, which fall within the judicial control of your jealousy'. This is reinforced by a rare (sixteenth-century Anglo-Irish) sense of *scope* (*OED* 10): 'A tract (of land); esp. a piece of land belonging to an individual owner'.
10 **my love** my affection; but also 'you, the object of my affection', who is imagined to be present in spirit. Four first-person pronouns in two lines emphasize that the poet was merely fantasizing that the friend was jealously spying on him through dreams. The octet wistfully imagines that the friend is collaborating with the poet's jealous fantasies; the sestet ruthlessly shows that he is not.
11 **defeat** thwart
12 **watchman** both (a) 'One who keeps vigil . . . a guardian' (*OED* 3), and more technically (b) 'a constable of the watch who . . . patrolled the streets by night to safeguard life and property' (*OED* 4). The pun occurs in *Much Ado* 3.3.38–9: 'Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend'. Compare the proverb 'One good friend watches for another', which is recorded from 1611 (Dent F716).
13 **watch** (a) keep lookout to protect your property; (b) stay awake; (c) keep watch to see if you are coming
wake (a) stay awake; (b) stay up revelling (*OED* 1d), as in *Hamlet* 1.4.9: 'The King doth wake tonight and takes his rouse'.

61

Is it thy will thy image should keep open
My heavy eyelids to the weary night?
Dost thou desire my slumbers should be broken,
While shadows like to thee do mock my sight?
Is it thy spirit that thou send'st from thee
So far from home into my deeds to pry,
To find out shames and idle hours in me,
The scope and tenure of thy jealousy?
O no, thy love, though much, is not so great:
It is my love that keeps mine eye awake,
Mine own true love that doth my rest defeat,
To play the watchman ever for thy sake.
For thee watch I, whilst thou dost wake elsewhere,
From me far off, with others all too near.

8 tenure] Q; tenour MALONE (*conj.* Capell)

1 **possesseth** occupies. The verb can be used of evil spirits (*OED* 5a) and of diseases (*OED* 1c), which would anticipate *remedy* in l. 3.

4 **grounded** firmly fixed or established. Suggests both foundations and nutritious soil, as in *FQ* 4.5.1: 'Friendship . . . | Without regard of good, dyes like ill grounded seeds'.

5 **Methinks** it seems to me

6 **true** well-formed
no truth of such account (a) no perfect shape so valuable; (b) no integrity or fidelity so valuable

7 **for myself** (a) by myself; (b) to satisfy myself
define 'To frame or give a precise description or definition' (*OED* 6c. *intr. or absol.*)

8 **other** others. The form is a relic of the Middle English plural 'othere'.

9 **glass** mirror

10 **Beated** a regular alternative form of 'beaten'
chapped 'Fissured; cracked; chapped' (*OED* 1). Q reads 'chopt'. The modernized text here loses the violence generated by the conjunction with *beated*; not to modernize, however, would overemphasize the physicality so lightly registered in Q.

10 **tanned** 'That has been rendered brown or tawny, esp. by exposure to the sun; sunburnt' (*OED* 2a). To be *tanned* in this period was not considered attractive. This complements *chapped* (which suggests that the poet has been repeatedly exposed to frosts) by implying repeated exposure to the sun.

11 **quite contrary I read** I interpret in quite the opposite sense

12 **Self . . . iniquity** To love oneself to such a degree would indeed be a sin.

13 **for** in the stead of. Compare the proverb 'A friend is one's second self' (Dent F696).

14 **Painting . . . days** describing (or making up) my old age with your youthful beauty. For other sonneteers who followed the convention that they should be ageing, see *22*.1 n. For the idea that praise of the friend is a form of self-praise, see *39*.

62

Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye,
And all my soul, and all my every part;
And for this sin there is no remedy,
It is so grounded inward in my heart.
Methinks no face so gracious is as mine,
No shape so true, no truth of such account,
And for myself mine own worth do define
As I all other in all worths surmount.
But when my glass shows me myself indeed,
Beated and chapped with tanned antiquity,
Mine own self-love quite contrary I read;
Self so self-loving were iniquity:
'Tis thee (my self) that for myself I praise,
Painting my age with beauty of thy days.

7 for] Q; so HUDSON 1881 (*conj.* Lettsom in Walker) do] Q; so *conj.* Walker 10 Beated] Q; 'Bated MALONE; batter'd *conj.* Malone; blasted *conj.* Steevens in Malone; beaten, *conj.* Collier chapped] Q (chopt)

Graziani, 'Numbering' (see headnote to Sonnet *60*), notes that the 'grand climacteric', or main crisis in the development of the human body, was believed to occur in one's 63rd year. See headnote to *49*. This sonnet marks the midpoint of the 126 poems addressed to the friend.

1 **Against** To secure me against the time when. 'In resistance to, in defence or protection from' (*OED* 13a).
2 **injurious** unjustly harmful. See *44*.2 and n.
crushed and o'erworn 'broken down and worn to pieces by Time'. The metaphor suggests at once fallen masonry and clothing which is creased, its pile crushed and worn out. Compare *outworn* in *64*.2.
3 **filled** See note to *17*.2 above.
5 **travelled** Q's 'trauaild' suggests 'laboured' as well as 'journeyed'.
5 **steepy** both 'a precipitous journey' and 'the very depths of night'
9 **For** against
fortify '*intr*. To erect fortifications; to establish a position of defence' (*OED* 9)
10 **confounding** destructive, thwarting
11 **That** so that
memory probably a material record; but the notion that age physically slices away the memory gives a graphic explanation of the absent-mindedness of old age. The surrounding organic imagery (*spring . . . still green*) gives to age's knife something of the renovatory power of a pruning implement.
12 **though . . . life** although he cuts (understood) my lover's life
14 **still green** a set phrase, meaning, 'permanently alive and fresh', 'Full of vitality; not withered or worn out. b. of immaterial things, *esp.* the memory of a person or event' (*OED* s.v. 'green' 6).

63

Against my love shall be as I am now,
With Time's injurious hand crushed and o'er-worn,
When hours have drained his blood and filled his brow
With lines and wrinkles, when his youthful morn
Hath travelled on to age's steepy night,
And all those beauties whereof now he's king
Are vanishing, or vanished out of sight,
Stealing away the treasure of his spring:
For such a time do I now fortify
Against confounding age's cruel knife,
That he shall never cut from memory
My sweet love's beauty, though my lover's life.
His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,
And they shall live, and he in them, still green.

3 filled] Q (fild); filed *conj.* Kerrigan 5 travelled] Q (trauaild)

1 **fell** cruel, ruthless

2 **rich proud cost** lavish, showy extravagant things

outworn 'Worn out, as clothes' (*OED*). Given the high cost of clothing in Shakespeare's age, it is likely that clothes are here on the poet's mind, although the word could also be used of inscriptions, as it is in Robert Sanderson's *Sermons* (1624), i.226: 'In old marbles and coins and out-worn inscriptions'.

3 **When sometime . . . razed** primarily 'When I see formerly high towers demolished to the ground', rather than the relatively lame 'When I from time to time see . . .'

4 **brass eternal slave** Here *eternal* could function either adjectivally or adverbially: 'immortal brass is a slave' or 'brass is eternally a slave'.

mortal rage (a) deadly destructiveness; (b) the passions of the merely mortal

6 **Advantage on** advantage over. Compare *Venus* l. 405.

kingdom The example of the erosion of the sea is often used in legal arguments in the period about the nature and limits of human jurisdiction (hence *kingdom*), as well as an instance of mutability. The two themes interpenetrate as here in *FQ* 5.4.1–21, where two brothers Amidas and Bracidas argue over ownership of a chest lost at sea by 'tract of time, that all things doth decay'. There is also an allusion to *Met.* 15.262–3; Golding 15. 287–9: 'Even so have places oftentimes exchangèd their estate, | For I have seen it sea which was substantial ground alate [formerly], | Again where sea was, I have seen the same become dry land'.

8 **Increasing . . . with store** As one side loses so the other gains, and as the one gains so the other loses. The dark vision of the poem's end is foreshadowed in the asymmetry which hides under the apparent balance of this line: *loss* is *increased* rather than diminished by *store*.

9 **interchange of state** At the most abstract level this means 'exchange of relative conditions'. 'Interchange' can also mean both 'vicissitude' and the exchange of reciprocal gifts (especially between aristocrats), and 'state' can extend through 'the body politic' (*OED* 29a) through to the legal sense of 'right or title to property' (*OED* 34). The phrase therefore also encompasses 'vicissitudes in political life' and 'exchanges of ownership of heritable possessions', senses activated by the comparison of sea and earth to kingdoms in the preceding lines. It may echo Golding's 'exchangèd their estate' from the passage quoted in the note to l. 6.

10 **state . . . decay** 'existence itself brought to nothing'. 'Confound' can mean 'To demolish, smash' (*OED* 1d), and 'To waste, consume, spend' (*OED* 1e). The political sense of 'state' may well be active here: so, 'commonwealths brought to nothing'.

11 **Ruin . . . ruminate** The internal semi-rhyme draws attention to the fact that the letters which make up *ruin* are hidden within *ruminate*. This anticipates the couplet's conclusion that thought and death are inextricable.

13 **which** The antecedent is *thought*, but its proximity to *death* makes thought and death become momentarily united.

64

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defacèd
The rich proud cost of outworn buried age,
When sometime lofty towers I see down razèd
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the wat'ry main,
Increasing store with loss, and loss with store;
When I have seen such interchange of state,
Or state itself confounded to decay,
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate,
That Time will come and take my love away.
This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

14 lose] Q (loose)

1 **Since** since there is neither
2 **o'ersways** combines physical and legal supremacy: 'To exercise sway over, rule over, govern' (*OED* 1); and 'In reference to physical qualities: To overpower by superior strength or intensity' (*OED* 1c).
3 **rage** destructive energy
hold a plea successfully present a legal suit
4 **action** combines the general sense of 'power to move' with the specific legal sense 'legal process; the right to raise such process' (*OED* 7a).
5 **hold out** 'To maintain resistance, remain unsubdued; to continue, endure, persist, last' (*OED* s.v. 'hold' 41j), with a strong military flavour
6 **wrackful** destructive
batt'ring The days are like battering rams.
7 **impregnable** invincible, proof against attack
8 **but time decays?** but time destroys (the gates)
10 **Shall . . . lie hid?** The friend is the treasured possession of Time, which cannot be prevented from returning to his coffers. Malone and Theobald found the idea of hiding something from a *chest* objectionable, hence their emendation to 'quest'. Time, though, simply wants to have his possession, the friend, locked away securely, as the poet had done in 52.
12 **spoil** continues the metaphor of sieging, via *OED* 1: 'Goods, esp. such as are valuable, taken from an enemy or captured city in time of war'.
14 **my love** my beloved, although the sense 'my affection' cannot be excluded

65

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'ersways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Against the wrackful siege of batt'ring days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong, but time decays?
O fearful meditation; where, alack,
Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back,
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

10 chest] Q; quest *conj*. Theobald in Malone 12 Or . . . of] MALONE; Or . . . Or Q; Or . . . o'er CAPELL

1 **all these** points forward to the list which follows. Q capitalizes the personifications sporadically (Nothing, Folly, Truth, Simplicity are capitalized; faith, honour, virtue, perfection, strength, art, captive good are not). The poem reads more like a survey of abstract ills than a personification allegory, so the capitals have all been removed. There is a general resemblance to *Lucrece* ll. 848–924 and to *Hamlet* 3.1.72–84.

2 **desert a beggar born** deserving merit (personified) born to be a beggar

3 **needy nothing** beggarly worthlessness (who spends what he does not have on ornaments and trifles). Editors have sometimes suggested the phrase means 'people who have need of nothing'.
trimmed dressed, connoting ornament as in Revelation 21: 2: 'And I John saw the holy city new Jerusalem come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride trimmed for her husband'.

4 **purest . . . forsworn** *Faith* ranges from 'personal oaths' to 'religious beliefs' which are repudiated or broken.

5 **gilded** here suggests 'splendid'; but its usual Shakespearian sense 'superficially attractive' makes the line double-edged.
misplaced denied the place that is its due

6 **strumpeted** either 'given the reputation of a whore' or 'forcibly turned into a whore'

8 **limping sway** a crippled authority. The idea is of legal power which is not matched by physical strength, via 'sovereign power or authority; dominion, rule' (*OED* s.v. 'sway' 6a). 'Limping sway' may have had political resonances to early readers, since James I had suffered an injury in childhood which made his walk ungainly. Complaints about the disregard of merit are common in the Jacobean period, as are lists of generalized abuses linked by anaphora. See e.g. Drayton's 'The Owl' ll. 1219–25. Art judiciously makes itself tongue-tied here by refusing to make specific references to particular abuses, but the timbre of the poem points to a date after 1603.

8 **disablèd** is pronounced as four syllables. Liquids 'are frequently pronounced as though an extra vowel were introduced between them and the preceding consonant', Abbott §477.

9 **art . . . authority** learning and literature is either (a) suppressed or censored by the powers that be; or (b) inhibited by the authority of the ancients. Efforts at censorship in the period were more frequently directed against the stage than other media.

10 **doctor-like** 'Doctor' in this period is not necessarily limited to medical practitioners, but could include all those deemed sufficiently competent to teach in a particular area of study.

11 **simple truth** plain, true speech

12 **captive . . . ill** goodness is the prisoner and servant of a dominant wickedness. The context suggests *OED* II for *attending*: 'To watch over, wait upon, with service, accompany as servant'. The image conveys the idea of a high-ranking officer imprisoned and made to serve a person of lower rank.

13 **Tired with all these** The repetition of the first line (*epimone*) closes the sonnet off without allowing it to progress forwards.

14 **to die** if I die

66

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry:
As to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimmed in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honour shamefully misplaced,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
And strength by limping sway disablèd,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly (doctor-like) controlling skill,
And simple truth miscalled simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill.
  Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,
  Save that to die I leave my love alone.

1–4 The opening question combines two distinct points of view: (a) a lament for the conduct of the friend: why should such a perfect creature spend time with worthless people? This requires the emphasis in reading the first line to be placed on *infection*, and carries a rebuke. As the poem progresses on to increasingly abstract concerns it is overwritten with (b) a lament for the times: why should such a perfect being exist in a corrupted world which is so unworthy of his perfection? This shifts the emphasis of l. 1 from *infection* to *he* ('who of all people deserves a better world'), and follows on from the satirical attack on present abuses in the previous poem.

1 **infection** carries more of a moral than a physical charge in this period: 'Moral contamination; vitiation of character or habits by evil influences' (*OED* 6). Also, perhaps anticipating *impiety* in l. 2, 'Corruption of faith or loyalty by heretical or seditious principles' (*OED* 7).
live is rhymed with *achieve* only here and in the Epilogue to *Henry V* (1599), which may indicate a date for this poem at the very end of the 1590s.

2 **grace** perhaps 'lend a gloss of elegance to'

3 **advantage** social advancement and material benefit

4 **lace** 'To mark as with (gold or silver) lace or embroidery' (*OED* 6a). This may take from the noun 'lace' (5a: 'Ornamental braid used for trimming men's coats') a connotation of 'tricking oneself out with unmerited ornaments of worth'.

5 **Why should . . . cheek** 'Why should others use make-up artificially to recreate the natural beauty of his face?' Recent editors have tended to exclude references here to 'painting' in the sense of 'pictorial representation', but the poem allows both forms of artifice to coexist and attacks them both at once.

6 **And steal . . . hue** and take a lifeless appearance of beauty from his fresh and living complexion. *Seeming* emends Q's 'seeing': it is likely the compositor missed a tilde over the second 'e' in his copy.

7 **poor beauty** refers probably to the secondary artificial beauty of those who paint. Alternatively it may be personified: 'Why should poor old Beauty bother with mere painted roses?'
indirectly seek Beauty proceeds obliquely, looking for charms in artificial representations rather than in the friend himself.

8 **Roses of shadow** unreal images of roses (either in make-up or in pictorial representations)
his rose is true the hue of his cheeks is real and unfeigned (and he is faithful)

9 **Why should he live** broadens to despair the initial question *wherefore with infection should he live* to mean 'why should he even remain alive now that nature has been deprived of true vitality by his exceptional beauty?'

10 **Beggared** deprived of. The word refers to 'Nature'.
blush course with a lively flush

11 **For she . . . his** Nature's only store of beauty and vitality is the friend.

12 **proud of many** while she boasts of many offspring (who are in fact derivative offspring of the friend). The sense is not very good here, but all emendations so far proposed are unsatisfactory. Capell modernized Q's 'proud' as 'proved', which might weakly mean 'tested out by' if Shakespeare had ever used the form 'proved of' anywhere else (which he does not), or be an abbreviated form of 'approved' if Shakespeare had ever used that form elsewhere (which he does not).

13–14 The couplet marks a final effort not to criticize the friend as one who lives with *infection* by claiming that Nature retains him as a reminder of her past glory.

14 **these last** these most recent times; also perhaps 'these final days of the world', alluding to recurrent millenarian fears that the end of the world was nigh

67

Ah, wherefore with infection should he live,
And with his presence grace impiety,
That sin by him advantage should achieve
And lace itself with his society?
Why should false painting imitate his cheek,
And steal dead seeming of his living hue?
Why should poor beauty indirectly seek
Roses of shadow, since his rose is true?
Why should he live, now Nature bankrupt is,
Beggared of blood to blush through lively veins,
For she hath no exchequer now but his,
And proud of many, lives upon his gains?
O him she stores to show what wealth she had
In days long since, before these last so bad.

6 seeming] MALONE (*conj.* Capell); seeing Q 12 proud] Q; prov'd CAPELL

A manuscript copy is in Folger MS V.a.148, Pt. 1, fo. 22^{v}.

1 **Thus** builds on the conclusion to the previous poem.

1, 13 **map** 'A detailed representation in epitome; a circumstantial account of a state of things. Very common in the 17th c.' (*OED* †2a *fig.*); 'The embodiment or incarnation (*of* a virtue, vice, character, etc.); the very picture or image *of*' (*OED* 2b).

days outworn past times, but also suggesting that the past has succumbed to exhaustion and destruction and perhaps subliminally too that nights of revelry have taken their toll on the friend's face (compare *61*.13).

3 **bastard signs of fair** make-up, or 'unnatural outward tokens of beauty stolen from others rather than naturally conceived'

born Q's 'borne' allows for both 'given birth to' and 'borne like garments'.

5–7 **Before . . . head** Wigs (popular in the 1580s and 1590s) were sometimes made from the hair of dead people. Cf. Bassanio's similar attack on unnatural ornament in *Merchant* 3.2.92–6: 'So are those crispèd, snaky, golden locks | Which makes such wanton gambols with the wind | Upon supposèd fairness, often known | To be the dowry of a second head, | The skull that bred them in the sepulchre'.

6 **The right of sepulchres** the due possessions of the tomb

8 **Ere . . . gay** 'in days before the hair of the dead made another person beautiful'

9 **holy antique hours** those pious ages past

10 **itself and true** The friend uses no deceptive ornaments, and so is a pattern of the unadorned simplicity of the golden age.

12 **Robbing no old** stealing from no old thing

14 **what beauty was of yore** what beauty (there) was in the past

68

Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn,
When beauty lived and died as flowers do now,
Before these bastard signs of fair were born,
Or durst inhabit on a living brow:
Before the golden tresses of the dead,
The right of sepulchres, were shorn away,
To live a second life on second head,
Ere beauty's dead fleece made another gay:
In him these holy antique hours are seen
Without all ornament, itself and true,
Making no summer of another's green,
Robbing no old to dress his beauty new;
And him as for a map doth Nature store,
To show false Art what beauty was of yore.

3 born] (borne) Q 7 a second] BENSON; a scond Q

1 **parts** combines 'portions' and 'personal attributes'.
2 **Want** lack
mend improve
3–4 **All tongues . . . commend** Everyone pays you that compliment simply by stating what is obviously the case, so that even your enemies commend you.
3 **due** Q's 'end' does not rhyme, and results either from eyeskip from 'mend' in the previous line or a misreading of what must have been 'due' in the manuscript.
5 **Thy outward** your outward appearance. Q's 'their' for 'thine/thy' is a frequent error. See *26*.12. Gildon's 'thy' is slightly more probable here than Malone's 'thine'. Although 'thine' is generally used before a vowel, on two occasions in the Sonnets 'thy' appears followed by a long 'o', once in l. 13 below and also in *87*.9: 'Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing'. In these cases the need for symmetrical repetition of 'thy' appears to overrule the requirement for 'thine' before a vowel (as also in *L.L.L.* 4.2.116). Sonnet *146*.4 reads 'thy outward'.
outward praise both 'public praise', and perhaps 'merely superficial praise'.
6 **that give . . . own** The friend deserves praise as his due, so he is simply receiving what belongs to him by right when he is praised.
7 **other accents** (a) other words; (b) different emphasis
confound confute, destroy
9 **beauty of thy mind** The poem still retains the expected Neoplatonic identification of external and internal beauty; in this way it manages to displace the odium for criticizing the friend onto the unnamed observers: '*I* know your mind is as beautiful as your body; but what of those lesser creatures who can only know what your mind is like by looking at your deeds?'
10 **in guess . . . deeds** They estimate the quality of your mind by that of your deeds (which are foul).
11 **churls** ungracious creatures (with an ironically incredulous intonation, since the people referred to are simply making inferences from what they have seen the friend do). The commas surrounding the word (which I take as a parenthetical term of abuse) are not in Q. N. F. Blake has argued that Q's 'churls their thoughts' should be retained as a possessive form (analogous to 'Purchas his Pilgrimage') which means 'churls' thoughts' (*NQ* 243 (1998), 355–7). This use of 'their' as a redundant indication of a genitive form, however, lessens the opposition in the line between *their thoughts* and *their eyes*.
12 **To thy . . . weeds** They add to your glorious outward appearance the sour smell of weeds. Cf. *93*.13–14 and *94*.13–14.
13 **odour** smell. Editors often follow Tucker in suggesting a secondary sense 'reputation'. This is not found before the nineteenth century, and is certainly not in Shakespeare.
14 **soil** solution. Q reads 'solye'. For emendations, see collation. Those which fit the required sense (to follow on from 'why' some word meaning 'reason' or 'solution' is required) are unfortunately all neologisms. Malone's 'solve' (a noun meaning 'solution') is not otherwise found. Benson, however, evidently felt that 'soyle' was an appropriate word which fitted its context. It was in use as a verb (*OED v.*[2] 3) meaning 'To resolve, clear up, expound, or explain; to answer (a question)'. A noun 'assoil' was also used to mean 'solution' in the 1590s, although the aphetic form is not otherwise recorded. 'Soil' also has secondary associations with earth and contamination which link it with the imagery of the poem, and is also used of sexual contact in *Measure* 5.1.140–1: 'Who is as free from touch or soil with her | As she from one ungot'.

69

Those parts of thee that the world's eye doth view
Want nothing that the thought of hearts can mend:
All tongues (the voice of souls) give thee that due,
Utt'ring bare truth, even so as foes commend.
Thy outward thus with outward praise is crowned,
But those same tongues that give thee so thine own
In other accents do this praise confound
By seeing farther than the eye hath shown.
They look into the beauty of thy mind,
And that, in guess, they measure by thy deeds.
Then, churls, their thoughts (although their eyes were kind)
To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds.
But why thy odour matcheth not thy show,
The soil is this, that thou dost common grow.

3 that due] MALONE (*conj.* Capell); that end Q; thy due GILDON 1714 5 Thy] GILDON 1714; Their Q; Thine MALONE 1790 14 soil] BENSON; solye Q; Toil GILDON; solve MALONE

1 **That thou . . . defect** It is through no fault of yours that you will (inevitably) be criticized. *Defect* is stressed on the second syllable, as is *suspect* (ll. 3. 13).
thou art Q reads 'thou are'; the only other occasion in which the Sonnets use 'thou are' is in *22.2*, 'So long as youth and thou are of one date', in which the plural subject ('youth and thou') explains the use of 'are'. This slip, combined with the 'their/thy' error in l. 6, suggests that 'you' and 'your' may have been overwritten with 'thou' and 'thy' in the manuscript of this poem. See *26.12* n.

2 **mark** target
was ever yet has always been. Compare the proverb 'Envy shoots at the fairest mark' (Dent E175).

3 **The ornament . . . suspect** Beauty's adornment is suspicion.

4 **crow** a bird of ill-omen. Pliny (i.276) writes of crows and rooks: 'These birds all of them keep much prattling and are full of chat; which most men take for an unlucky sign and presage of ill fortune'.

5 **So** provided that
doth but approve only proves

6 **Thy** Q reads 'Their'. For the 'their/thy' error see *26.12* n.
being wooed of time probably means 'since you are seduced by the nature of these corrupt times' or perhaps 'time is showering all its gifts upon you'. It is hard to see how the phrase can mean 'being led astray by your youthful years' or 'wooed because of your time of life' as many editors wish. Of the many emendations proposed the manuscript suggestion in the Bodley-Caldecott copy, 'woo'd ofttime', is attractively simple. Q is retained as the *difficilior lectio*, but it is so difficult that Bodley may be preferable.

7 **canker . . . love** Canker worms proverbially love the fairest blooms. See *35.4* n.

8 **prime** youth, spring

9 **the ambush of young days** Youth is presented as a time in which one could be surprised by enemies.

10 **charged** primarily 'attacked'; also perhaps 'blamed, censured' (*OED* 15a)

11–12 **Yet . . . enlarged** 'Yet this praise cannot be so irrefutably strong as to prevent the attacks of envy, which is constantly captured and then freed.' The final image suggests the Blattant Beast of *FQ* 6.12.23–41, which is chained up by Calidore and then breaks free once more.

13–14 **If some . . . owe** If some suspicion of wickedness did not cloud your appearance you would be sole monarch over whole kingdoms of lovers. *Suspect* means 'suspicion'. *Owe* means 'own'. The couplet stays on the level of outward appearance (*masked . . . show*) and pointedly avoids reflections on the friend's deeds or moral nature.

70

That thou art blamed shall not be thy defect,
For slander's mark was ever yet the fair.
The ornament of beauty is suspect,
A crow that flies in heaven's sweetest air.
So thou be good, slander doth but approve
Thy worth the greater, being wooed of time.
For canker vice the sweetest buds doth love,
And thou present'st a pure unstainèd prime.
Thou hast passed by the ambush of young days,
Either not assailed, or victor, being charged;
Yet this thy praise cannot be so thy praise
To tie up envy, evermore enlarged.
If some suspect of ill masked not thy show
Then thou alone kingdoms of hearts shouldst owe.

1 art] BENSON; are Q 6 Thy] MALONE (*conj.* Capell); Their Q wooed of time] Q; woo'd oftime *MS conj. in Bodley-Caldecott*; void of crime *conj.* Malone; woo'd o'th'time *conj.* Ingram and Redpath

The expected term of life is threescore and ten (70) years; as Duncan-Jones notes, the 71st sonnet turns to thoughts of death. A manuscript copy is found in MS Folger V.a.162, fo. 12^{v}.

1 **No** The intensity of self-denial (*No . . . Nay . . . O if*) in fact makes strong claims to be remembered, linking this sonnet with 57 as a poem in which professed abjection masks an attempt to claim reciprocal love. See Introduction, pp. 121–2.

2 **surly sullen bell** The passing bell was rung to mark the death of a parishioner, and was then rung annually for a fee in remembrance of the dead.

4 **vilest worms** Q's archaic form 'vildest' has greater phonic weight than its modernized equivalent. 'I shall say to corruption, Thou art my father, *and* to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister', Job 17: 14.

6 **so** both 'in such a way' and 'to such an extent'

7 **in your sweet thoughts** The phrase makes a compensation for oblivion: if the poet is forgotten about he at least has the pleasure of remaining unnoticed in the friend's *sweet thoughts*. That pleasure is, however, immediately qualified by *If*.

8 **make you woe** cause you grief

10 **compounded** mingled with

12 **decay** die

13 **look into** investigate

14 **mock you with me** use your love for me as a means of scorning you; also 'associate you with their already established mockery of me'

71

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world with vilest worms to dwell:
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it, for I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O, if (I say) you look upon this verse
When I (perhaps) compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse;
But let your love even with my life decay,
  Lest the wise world should look into your moan
  And mock you with me after I am gone.

2 Than] Q (Then) surly sullen] Q; sullen surly FOL5 8 you] Q; me FOL5

1 **recite** tell (often with a suggestion as now of repeating something learnt by rote from a book). There may be a more formal sense (*OED* 2b *Law*: 'To rehearse or state in a deed or other document (some fact bearing closely upon the matter in hand)'), which would anticipate *prove* in l. 4.

2–3 **love** | **After my death** Q does not punctuate after *love*, which allows *after my death* to function with both *forget me quite* and (wistfully) with *love*.

4 **prove** show (to the satisfaction of a chillingly dispassionate authority)

6 **To do . . . desert** (a) to praise me more than I deserve; (b) to do more for me than my merits could if left unassisted

7 **hang more praise** The image is of a monument strewn with verses or trophies.

7 **I** is ungrammatical, presumably for the sake of rhyme.

8 **niggard** mean, sparing

9–10 **O, lest . . . untrue** The paradox here is that a love which is *true* (faithful) might lead the friend to lavish false praises on the poet. *Untrue* functions both as an adjective agreeing with *me* and as adverb describing the friend's hypothetical speech of praise.

11 **My name be buried** let my name be buried (subjunctive)

12 **nor . . . nor** neither . . . nor

13 **bring forth** is often used of poetic compositions: so 'my sonnets'.

14 **so should you** (be ashamed)
nothing worth which are without any value (i.e. me)

72

O, lest the world should task you to recite
What merit lived in me that you should love
After my death (dear love) forget me quite,
For you in me can nothing worthy prove;
Unless you would devise some virtuous lie,
To do more for me than mine own desert,
And hang more praise upon deceasèd I
Than niggard truth would willingly impart.
O, lest your true love may seem false in this,
That you for love speak well of me untrue,
My name be buried where my body is,
And live no more to shame nor me, nor you.
For I am shamed by that which I bring forth,
And so should you, to love things nothing worth.

6 To do more for me] Q; To doe for me more *conj*. Taylor in Oxford

2 **or none, or few** Some editors remove Q's comma in order to produce a straight choice ('either none or few'). Q's punctuation creates the effect of a searching eye, which sees first no leaves and then a few reminders of past luxuriance.

3 **against** in anticipation of; also perhaps 'in opposition to'

4 **Bare ruined choirs** Malone's emendation of Q's 'Bare rn'wed quiers' is substantively a modernization of Benson's 'Bare ruin'd quires'. *Choirs* refers to 'That part of a church appropriated to the singers; *spec.* the part eastward of the nave, in which the services are performed' (*OED* 2a). The comparison depends primarily on the fact that singing once went on both in the trees and in the choirs, but may be reinforced by the visual similarity between the silhouette of a bare tree and of the ruined framework of Gothic tracery. Q's 'quiers' may also distantly suggest 'quires' of paper, a sense activated both by *yellow leaves* in l. 2 (cf. *17*.9) and by the disparaging remarks on Shakespeare's own works with which the previous sonnet ends. The passage invites comparison with *Cymbeline* 3.3.42–3: 'Our cage | We make a choir, as doth the prisoned bird'.

4 **where late the sweet birds sang** The phrase applies simultaneously to the trees (once filled with birds) and to the *ruined choirs*, once filled with a singing choir. It is also possible that, on the narrower timescale implied by *late* (recently), birds used to sing on the ruins. The effect is of both recent and longer-term abandonment.

6 **fadeth** The subject is *such day*, but as sunset also fades in the west *day* may seem for a moment to be a hanging subject, left deprived of the activity of a verb.

7 **Which** The antecedent is *twilight*, but a reader might for a moment see *day*, and even *west*, as possible alternatives. This grammatical uncertainty widens the sway of night, which seems at once to absorb twilight, the day, sunset, and even perhaps the west.

8 **Death's second self** is a conventional representation of sleep.
seals up (a) encloses, as in a coffin, and marks with a seal to prevent unauthorized opening; (b) 'seels up' as a falconer stitches up the eyes of a hawk, as in *Macbeth* 3.2.47–8: 'Come, seeling night, | Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day'.

12 **Consumed with** choked by (ash). Cf. *1*.5–7. The third quatrain eases the poem towards total darkness: *autumn*, then *twilight*, then the final stages of a day as a fire is allowed to choke itself in ash.

14 **that** the poet; also life
leave forgo; the sense 'depart from' is also in play

73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

4 Bare ruined choirs] MALONE; Bare rn'wd quiers Q; Bare ruin'd quires BENSON; Barren'd of quires CAPELL

1 **contented** Q has no punctuation here. Malone's colon (often adopted) is unnecessary.
when that fell arrest i.e. death. *Fell* means 'cruel, deadly'. 'Arrest' can mean just 'pause or cessation'. The lack of *bail* referred to in l. 2 would have activated the modern sense 'to apprehend someone' (*OED* 8), as in *Hamlet* 5.2.288–9: 'this fell sergeant Death | Is strict in his arrest'.

2 **bail** 'Security given for the release of a prisoner from imprisonment, pending his trial' (*OED* 5)

3 **some interest** some right of ownership or title (*OED* 1a), rather than 'money paid for the use of money lent' (*OED* 10a). The conceit here is that the poet's life has a continuing share in the poems; as the poems pass on after the poet's death to the friend, he retains a partial share of the poet through the poems.

4 **for memorial** (a) as a reminder; (b) as a formal monument

5 **review** 'To survey; to take a survey of' (*OED* 5a). Manuscript poems in the period were often copied into miscellanies and 'improved' by the copyist. This activates the sense 'To look over or through (a book, etc.) in order to correct or improve; to revise' (*OED* 3a), as in Holland's translation of *Plutarch's Moralia* 1274: 'Dionysius had put into his hands a tragedy of his own making, commanding him to review and correct the same'. This would allay the unease of G. B. Evans, who finds the repetition of *review* 'rhetorically flat' and suggests emending to *renew*.

6 **was** which was
consecrate to solemnly devoted to you (like a religious shrine)

7 **The earth can have but earth** echoes the Elizabethan burial service: 'earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust', which was proverbial (Dent E30).

8 **spirit** monosyllabic. It may mean 'soul' (*OED* 2a), but its opposition to *dregs* suggests that it may also mean 'the sweet volatile essence' (as in *OED* 21a, just becoming active in this period), with perhaps a glance back to the idea of preserving life through the extraction of perfume in 5 and *6*.

9 **So then** (a) when I die; (b) therefore. The past tense (*hast lost*) suddenly verifies the argument: the poet presents himself as already dead while he offers his consolation to the friend, which rings out like an echo from the grave.
but only

9–11 **dregs . . . knife** The four noun clauses in apposition here all describe *my body being dead*, which is both the useless remnant of life (*dregs*), a thing that is preyed upon by worms, and something which is conquered in a cowardly manner by a person of no account (*the coward conquest of a wretch's knife*). The last phrase is problematic because *coward* functions chiefly as an adjective which is transferred from the *wretch* to his action, but is also used to register contempt for the weakness of the body (a mere coward). Editors have also fruitlessly speculated as to who the *wretch* is (Shakespeare, Marlowe, Death, Time, or an unnamed assassin are the favoured candidates). It seems most likely to be a generic term for 'any worthless person'.

12 **of thee** by you

13 **The worth . . . contains** the real value of the body is the spirit

14 **this** i.e. this poem

74

But be contented when that fell arrest
Without all bail shall carry me away;
My life hath in this line some interest,
Which for memorial still with thee shall stay.
When thou reviewest this, thou dost review
The very part was consecrate to thee.
The earth can have but earth, which is his due;
My spirit is thine, the better part of me.
So then thou hast but lost the dregs of life,
The prey of worms, my body being dead,
The coward conquest of a wretch's knife,
Too base of thee to be rememberèd.
The worth of that, is that which it contains,
And that is this, and this with thee remains.

1 contented] Q; contented: MALONE 5 review] Q; renew *conj.* G. B. Evans 12 rememberèd] Q (remembred)

1 **So . . . life** 'you nourish my thoughts as food nourishes life'
2 **sweet seasoned** gentle and temperate. *Seasoned* carries the senses 'Seasonable, opportune, suitable' (*OED* 1) and 'Flavoured, spiced' (*OED* 2). Some editors read 'sweet-seasoned', meaning both 'tempered with gentleness or sweetness' and perhaps 'of the sweet season' (Pooler).
3 **for the peace of you** in order to obtain the peace afforded by your company
5 **proud as an enjoyer** glorying in his material possession. To have 'enjoyment' of something is in effect to have possession of it.
6 **Doubting** fearing
filching age thievish age in which we live
7 **counting** reckoning. The word bridges the gap between the miser, obsessively counting his money, and the lover's assessment of what is most enjoyable.
8 **bettered . . . pleasure** thinking it better than what I had thought best (that is, privately contemplating you) that everyone should see the source of my delight
10 **clean** is an adverb: completely, utterly.
12 **Save what . . . took** except what is received from you or which must be taken from you (presumably because the friend will not always voluntarily supply it). For the sexual senses of 'have' and 'take' see Partridge, 119 and 197.
13 **pine** starve. Cf. *Lucrece* l. 1115.
14 **Or . . . away** Either feasting on every delight, or with all my source of nourishment absent. *Gluttoning* is the first cited instance in *OED* of the verb.

75

So are you to my thoughts as food to life,
Or as sweet seasoned showers are to the ground;
And for the peace of you I hold such strife
As 'twixt a miser and his wealth is found:
Now proud as an enjoyer, and anon
Doubting the filching age will steal his treasure,
Now counting best to be with you alone,
Then bettered that the world may see my pleasure;
Sometime all full with feasting on your sight,
And by and by clean starvèd for a look.
Possessing or pursuing, no delight,
Save what is had or must be from you took.
  Thus do I pine and surfeit day by day,
  Or gluttoning on all, or all away.

3 peace] 9; price *or* sake *conj*. Malone

1 **pride** 'ostentatious adornment or ornamentation' (*OED* 7). The word, like many terms used to describe the vitality which the Sonnets supposedly lack, has pejorative associations. The poem as a whole plays with the varied connotations of mutability in the period, both positive (bringing innovation), and negative (fickle departures from stable ancient points of reference).

2 **variation** here 'variety' in a positive sense. Many sixteenth-century usages of the word associate it with fickleness or discord. (The musical sense, 'repetition of a theme in a new form', is not found before the nineteenth century.)

quick change 'lively variety'. *Quick* may suggest 'Living, endowed with life, in contrast to what is naturally inanimate' (*OED* 1a) and contrast with *barren* above.

3 **glance** 'To move rapidly, esp. in an oblique or transverse direction; to dart, shoot; to spring *aside*' (*OED* 2)

4 **new-found methods** The word 'method' in the period 1590–1600 was undergoing significant changes. Emergent senses include: 'A special form of procedure adopted in any branch of mental activity' (*OED* 2a) and 'a way of doing anything, esp. according to a defined and regular plan' (*OED* 3a; first cited in *Errors* 2.2.34); 'an author's design or plan' (*OED* 6a, first cited from *1 Henry VI* 3.1.13: 'the method of my pen'); 'A regular, systematic arrangement of literary materials; a methodical exposition' *OED* 6b). As Puttenham put it, 5: 'If Poesy be now an Art . . . and yet were none, until by studious persons fashioned and reduced into a method of rules and precepts'. Shakespeare describes his verse as lacking innovation in language which draws on recent literary criticism and displays his own powers of linguistic innovation.

4 **compounds strange** *OED* suggests 'A compound word, a verbal compound' (*OED* 2c). At the end of Jonson's *Poetaster* Crispinus, a character representing John Marston, is made to vomit out his polysyllabic coinages. Compound epithets were, however, favourites with Shakespeare. The phrase plays on 'A compound substance; *spec.* a compounded drug, as opposed to "simples" ' (*OED* 2a), exploiting the potentially poisonous effect of such medicines to suggest that strange words can kill. Compare *Cymbeline* 1.5.8: 'These most poisonous compounds', which is *OED*'s first citation of this sense.

5 **all one** constantly the same

6 **noted weed** familiar dress

7 **tell** relate. Q reads 'fel'.

8 **their birth** 'Parentage, lineage, extraction, descent; *esp.* rank, station, position' (*OED* 5a). The antecedent of *their* is *every word*, which is taken as plural.

where whence

11 **new** afresh

13 **daily new and old** The same sun bursts forth freshly each day. The triumphal image makes explicit what the many linguistic innovations in the poem have already made implicit: that Shakespeare's professed old-fashionedness is novelty.

14 **telling what is told** (a) relating what has already been related; (b) counting what has been counted before. Sense (b) picks out the financial register of *spending* in l. 12.

76

Why is my verse so barren of new pride,
So far from variation or quick change?
Why with the time do I not glance aside
To new-found methods, and to compounds strange?
Why write I still all one, ever the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed,
That every word doth almost tell my name,
Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?
O know, sweet love, I always write of you,
And you and love are still my argument;
So all my best is dressing old words new,
Spending again what is already spent:
  For as the sun is daily new and old,
  So is my love, still telling what is told.

7 tell] MALONE (*conj.* Capell); fel Q; fell LINTOT; sell *conj.* This edition

1 **wear** endure, or wear away. Q reads 'were'. A seventeenth-century reader might have had a glimpse of an accelerated process of ageing ('your mirror will show you how your beauties were') before settling on 'your mirror will show you how your beauties are withstanding the effects of time'.

2 **Thy dial** The possessive pronoun suggests a personal timepiece is meant, rather than a sundial, although the *shady stealth* of l. 7 evokes the movement of the sun's shadow across a dial's face. Shakespeare uses the word in both senses: cf. *3 Henry VI (True Tragedy)* 2.5.24–5: 'To carve out dials quaintly, point by point, | Thereby to see the minutes how they run', and *As You Like It* 2.7.20–3: 'And then he drew a dial from his poke, | And . . . | Says very wisely "It is ten o'clock"'. The word can also be used of large clocks, as in Barnabe Barnes, *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* (1593), 56, which compares each element of the lover to a part of a clock. *Dial* is also used in the period in the title of didactic works, such as Guevara's *Dial of Princes* (trans. North (1557), sig. b1^{v}), which 'showeth and teacheth us, how we ought to occupy our minds'.

minutes Q's 'mynuits' also suggests 'midnights' via the French 'minuit'. See *60*.2.

3 **vacant leaves** blank sheets. Steevens first suggested that this poem may have been written to accompany the gift of a blank manuscript notebook (cf. *122*). This line then would mean 'you will write your thoughts on these blank pages'.

4 **taste** experience

6 **mouthèd** gaping, open-mouthed (*OED* 2)

give thee memory remind you. The odd locution unites remembering with learning for the first time.

7 **shady stealth** slow-moving shadow; also anticipating *thievish* in l. 8, as Time steals away youth like a thief by night. The imperceptible motion of a clock's hand was proverbial (Dent D321).

9 **Look what** whatever (as at 9.9); 'determine' and 'have regard to' also register.

10 **Commit** consign. Table books could be used as an external form of memory in the period, as in Hamlet's 'My tables—meet it is I set it down | That one may smile and smile and be a villain' (1.5.108–9).

waste blanks these empty sheets of paper. Q's 'blacks' might refer to ink, but is hard to reconcile with 'these', a pronoun which seems most naturally to be in concord with the *vacant leaves* referred to above. The manuscript copy probably had a tilde over the 'a', a standard abbreviation for 'an' often misread by compositors, as it was in *Hamlet* Q2 2.2.348, which reads 'black verse' where F1 and Q1 read 'blanke'.

10–12 **thou shalt . . . mind** The exhortation to breed from Sonnets *1–17* has become metaphorical: 'Leave those children (i.e. writings) which were born from your brain, and nurse them for a while, and you will find in them a new resemblance of your mind, as one sees a new resemblance of oneself in one's children, once they have grown up.' *To take a new acquaintance* is the equivalent of 'to make an acquaintance'.

13 **offices** kindly duties. The word evokes the Ciceronian conception of an *officium* which can embrace family responsibilities: the friend is urged to keep a kindly watch on his metaphorical family of thoughts and writings. The couplet also points back to the whole argument of the poem, urging the friend to repeat, as a duty, or as a clerk in holy orders says the *offices* of the dead (*OED* 5), his observations of the passage of time, which will enrich him and his writing.

77

Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear,
Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste,
The vacant leaves thy mind's imprint will bear,
And of this book this learning mayst thou taste:
The wrinkles which thy glass will truly show
Of mouthèd graves will give thee memory;
Thou by thy dial's shady stealth mayst know
Time's thievish progress to eternity.
Look what thy memory cannot contain,
Commit to these waste blanks, and thou shalt find
Those children nursed, delivered from thy brain,
To take a new acquaintance of thy mind.
These offices, so oft as thou wilt look,
Shall profit thee, and much enrich thy book.

1 wear] GILDON 1714; were Q 2 minutes] Q (mynuits) 3 The] Q; These CAPELL 6 thee] Q; the BENSON 10 blanks] MALONE (*conj.* Theobald); blacks Q

Sonnets *78–86* concern a 'rival poet', who has been severally identified with Chapman, Marlowe, Jonson, and a variety of lesser figures. There are moments in the sequence (notably *86*) which appear to attack claims to divine inspiration of a kind which were made more consistently by Chapman than by any other English poet of the period, but on the whole there are insufficient grounds for finally identifying a single rival. Sonnet sequences do occasionally attack scribbling rivals, although never at such length (the anonymous *Zepheria* (1594), Canzon 31: 'Admit he write, my quill hath done as much: | Admit he sigh, that have I done and more'). In the criticism and poetry of the 1590s claims for the value and critical integrity of one's own verse are often made in the form of attacks on usually unnamed and often composite rivals: so Daniel's *Delia* (1592), 46.1–2 defines its own project against that of others, 'Let others sing of Knights and Palladines, | In agèd accents, and untimely words', and Sidney frequently opposes his own art—which he claims is relatively unornamented and the product of passion which has not been learnt by rote from Petrarch—to that of unnamed rivals. The 'rival poet' is probably a similar composite, born out of the need to define and defend one's own writing by opposition to that of another.

1–4 **So oft . . . disperse** 'I have invoked you as my inspiration so often, and have found you such a benefit to my writing, that every stranger has adopted my practice and circulates their verse under the protection of your patronage.' *Fair assistance* delicately suggests that the friend provides at once material assistance through patronage ('deserved material reward'), elegant critical help, and a beauty which inspires. *Alien* is italicized in Q, probably to indicate that it is a rare word. *OED* cites no other adjectival usage under 1, 'Belonging to another person, place, or family; strange, foreign, not of one's own', after 1382. *Disperse* is used in *OED* sense 4b: 'To distribute, put into circulation (books, coins, articles of commerce); to give currency to', suggesting that the friend's patronage gives value to poetry issued in his name.

5 **on high** (a) from the heavens; (b) at high volume

7 **added feathers** In falconry feathers were added ('imped') onto the wings of birds to replace broken plumage. Alternatively stolen plumage could be used to beautify the ugly: Shakespeare himself was called by Robert Greene 'an upstart crow beautified with our feathers'.
learned's Q's 'learneds' could also represent a metaplasmic superlative form of learned, corresponding to 'learnedest's'. Cf. *51.10* n.

9 **compile** compose. The word was archaic by 1600 in this sense: later usages tend to mean 'mere gathering together of pre-existing documents'. It suits the humility with which Shakespeare is presenting his own work. The verb is otherwise only used by Shakespeare in *85.2*, another poem which considers rival poets, and *L.L.L.*, a play much concerned with the banging together of derivative Petrarchan poems.

10 **influence** that which gives it strength and status. There may be an allusion to the *influence* of the stars on the affairs of men, for which see *15.4* n.

11 **mend the style** improve on the ornament and verbal disposition

12 **graces gracèd be** are improved by your additional touches of elegance. The musical sense 'to provide with grace notes (trills etc.)' is not cited in *OED* before 1659, but may be anticipated here.

13 **thou art all my art** you provide the entire substance of my skill (not merely its ornamentation)
advance Both this and *influence* can refer to social or political authority: 'To raise or promote (a person) in rank or office, to prefer' (*OED* 10a). The friend bestows position and authority on an unworthy recipient.

14 **learning . . . ignorance** Both of these terms had wider and stronger senses in the sixteenth century than they do now: *learning* implies achieved mastery in all the arts and in what we now call sciences; *ignorance* connotes not simple lack of knowledge but lack of all cultivation.

78

So oft have I invoked thee for my Muse
And found such fair assistance in my verse
As every alien pen hath got my use,
And under thee their poesy disperse.
Thine eyes, that taught the dumb on high to sing,
And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,
Have added feathers to the learnèd's wing,
And given grace a double majesty.
Yet be most proud of that which I compile,
Whose influence is thine, and born of thee.
In others' works thou dost but mend the style,
And arts with thy sweet graces gracèd be;
  But thou art all my art, and dost advance
  As high as learning my rude ignorance.

7 learned's] Q (learneds); learnedst *conj.* Anon. in Cambridge

2 **gentle grace** (a) mild elegance; (b) benign generosity; (c) high-born excellence
3 **decayed** can mean 'dead' (as in *71*.12 and *15*.11), and 'beaten down by age' (as in *13*.9 and *16*.3). It combines the poet's fear that his art has been superseded (as in *76*) with his anxieties about his own decrepitude (compare *37*).
4 **give another place** yield supremacy to another person, as in a formal procession or state entry organized by rank
5 **thy lovely argument** the beautiful subject for verse which is you
7 **thy poet** (i.e. no longer me). For the contemptuous usage of *poet*, see *17*.7 n.
of thee . . . invent whatever he finds as a literary subject in you. *Invent* often implies that the matter found out already exists: *of thee* may therefore have a sense of 'taken from you', which is brought out by *robs* in l. 8.
9 **lends** attributes to, with a play on the financial sense
10 **behaviour** 'Good manners, elegant deportment' (*OED* 1e) as much as the neutral 'way of conducting yourself'
11 **afford** primarily 'offer', but also with a suggestion, crisply emphasized in the couplet, that the poet's imagination is impoverished, possessing only what the friend has previously given him
14 **owes** is obliged to pay you

79

Whilst I alone did call upon thy aid
My verse alone had all thy gentle grace,
But now my gracious numbers are decayed,
And my sick Muse doth give another place.
I grant (sweet love) thy lovely argument
Deserves the travail of a worthier pen,
Yet what of thee thy poet doth invent
He robs thee of, and pays it thee again.
He lends thee virtue, and he stole that word
From thy behaviour; beauty doth he give
And found it in thy cheek; he can afford
No praise to thee but what in thee doth live.
Then thank him not for that which he doth say,
Since what he owes thee, thou thyself dost pay.

2 **better spirit** the 'poet' of the previous sonnet. *Spirit* is monosyllabic.
use continues the financial metaphors of the previous poem: turn a fast buck from usury.

5 **(wide . . . is)** which is as capacious as the sea

7 **saucy barque** presumptuous small boat. *Saucy c.*1600 conveys a strong sense of indecorous disrespect for social rank. Cf. *Troilus* 1.3.41–3: 'Where's then the saucy boat, | Whose weak untimbered sides but even now | Co-rivalled greatness?'
inferior is trisyllabic.

8 **wilfully** (a) 'According to one's own will; at will, freely' (*OED* 2b); (b) 'In a self-willed manner, perversely, obstinately, stubbornly' (*OED* 5).

9 **shallowest help** slightest assistance. In the conceit of the poem Shakespeare's barque is presented as a boat with a very small draught which can exist in the shallows of his patron's favour, whereas the rival poet's vessel can venture onto the *soundless deep* (l. 10), i.e. the unfathomable depths of the centre of the ocean.

11 **(being wrecked)** (a) since I am already wrecked; (b) when I happen to be wrecked

12 **tall building** high-masted, and presumably also deep in draught
goodly pride rich equipment. *Pride* is used, as often, to confer praise whilst suggesting presumption. See e.g. *76*.1.

13 **cast away** abandoned, made masterless; also with a very strong theological sense of 'having been denied God's grace', as (frequently) in the marginal notes to the Geneva Bible. The maritime context here may reflect Jonah 2: 4–5: 'Then I said, I am cast away out of thy sight: yet will I look again toward thine holy Temple. The waters compassed me about unto the soul: the depth closed me round about, and the weeds were wrapped about mine head.'

14 **The worst . . . decay** 'The worst aspect of my story was that (a) my beloved (b) my affection was the source of my ruin.'

80

O, how I faint when I of you do write,
Knowing a better spirit doth use your name,
And in the praise thereof spends all his might
To make me tongue-tied speaking of your fame.
But since your worth (wide as the ocean is)
The humble as the proudest sail doth bear,
My saucy barque (inferior far to his)
On your broad main doth wilfully appear.
Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat,
Whilst he upon your soundless deep doth ride;
Or (being wrecked) I am a worthless boat,
He of tall building, and of goodly pride.
Then if he thrive and I be cast away,
The worst was this, my love was my decay.

11 wrecked] Q (wrackt)

1–2 **Or . . . Or** Whether (*OED* sense 3b) . . . or. See Abbott §136. The poem works by establishing a careful asymmetry beneath these apparently symmetrical alternatives: there is no suggestion that the friend will rot, or that he will compose an epitaph for the poet.

3 **From hence** from this world; possibly also anticipating the senses of the same phrase in l. 5 'from this poem' and 'from henceforth'

4 **in me each part** all the qualities I have. Just possibly also 'although every aspect of you will be forgotten by me in death'.

6 **I . . . to all the world must die** I must lose at once my existence and my reputation in the eyes of the world.

7 **common grave** undistinguished burial. Bones were in this period jumbled together in charnel houses (and it was to avoid this fate that tradition has it Shakespeare composed the epitaph on his tomb, 'Blessed be the man that spares these stones, | And cursed be he that moves my bones'), so also perhaps 'shared with others'.

8 **entombèd in men's eyes** (a) placed in a splendid tomb where all can see you; (b) given a tomb in the eyes of those who read my poems. Sense (b) anticipates the following quatrain, which puts increasing emphasis on the revitalizing power of verse when it is read aloud with *tongue* and *breath*. It also moves this quatrain beyond a simple restatement of the opposition between the poet's fate (oblivion) and that of the friend (stately epitaphs).

9 **Your . . . verse** my verse will be your monument. A *monument* could be an effigy or written memorial, not just a stone edifice. The inversion of the phrase allows for the momentary reading 'your monument is all I need for verse', before the remainder of the sestet moves to consider the immortality conferred by the constant rereadings of verse. Milton's poem 'On Shakespeare', ll. 1–4, takes its departure from this poem: 'What need my Shakespeare for his honoured bones | The labour of an age in pilèd stones, | Or that his hallowed relics should be hid | Under a star-ypointing pyramid'.

12 **breathers** a Shakespearian coinage for 'living creatures'

81

Or I shall live your epitaph to make,
Or you survive when I in earth am rotten,
From hence your memory death cannot take,
Although in me each part will be forgotten.
Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though I (once gone) to all the world must die.
The earth can yield me but a common grave
When you entombèd in men's eyes shall lie:
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read,
And tongues-to-be your being shall rehearse,
When all the breathers of this world are dead.
You still shall live (such virtue hath my pen)
Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.

1 **married** i.e. irrevocably tied, 'forsaking all other' as the Solemnization of Matrimony in the Book of Common Prayer has it. The past tense *wert* hints that the marriage has been irrevocably damaged by the friend's infidelity in accepting the *dedicated words* of other writers.

2 **attaint** dishonour, or the reputation of dishonour, especially sexual dishonour. Shakespeare probably found the word in Daniel's *Complaint of Rosamond* l. 38, which follows the sonnet sequence *Delia*: 'Her legend justifies her foul attaint'. Possibly also 'disease': see *Venus* l. 741 n., where there is a possible link with venereal disease.

o'er-look read; perhaps 'cast a glance at' or 'To look down upon' (*OED* 4)

3 **dedicated words** (a) 'devoted words'; (b) words of praise in a poem dedicated to a particular recipient

4 **their fair subject** It is just possible this should read 'thy fair subject' (i.e. the beautiful subject which is you) given the frequency of the 'their/thy' error in Q, on which see *26*.12 n.

5 **fair** (a) beautiful; (b) blond; (c) just, anticipating *finding* in the semi-legal sense in l. 6

6 **Finding . . . praise** in finding (as a jury does) that your merit exceeds my capacity to praise; or perhaps 'lies beyond a boundary past which it is unseemly to praise'

8 **Some . . . days** some more up-to-date production of these times which constantly improve on what has gone before (compare *32*.5). *Stamp* may simply mean 'Character, kind' (*OED* 13e). It might also continue the submerged legal metaphor and mean 'seal of authority'. It can also (although rarely) mean 'printing press' (*OED* 6).

10 **strainèd touches** 'forcedly artificial ornaments'. *OED* cites this as the first instance of 'strained' 5: 'interpreted in a laboured, far-fetched, or non-natural sense'. *Touches* is used in sense 10a: 'a stroke or dash of a brush, pencil, pen, chisel, or the like'.

11 **sympathized** represented; also used by Shakespeare to convey a correspondence between an emotion or object and its representation in *Richard II* 5.1.46–7: 'the senseless brands will sympathize | The heavy accent of thy moving tongue, | And in compassion weep the fire out', and *Lucrece* l. 1113.

12 **plain** exploits the range of senses from 'unornamented' to 'honest'. Often used in the period 1580–1610 to mean 'speech lacking the schemes and tropes of rhetoric and therefore honest'. For the association between make-up and excessive rhetorical ornamentation, see *21*.3 n.

13 **gross painting** (a) crude artificial ornaments resembling make-up; (b) bad pictorial representation; (c) excessive rhetorical ornamentation.

14 **need** lack

in thee in applying it to thee; also with a hint of criticism of the friend himself for contaminating himself with flattering misrepresentations.

82

I grant thou wert not married to my Muse,
And therefore mayst without attaint o'er-look
The dedicated words which writers use
Of their fair subject, blessing every book.
Thou art as fair in knowledge as in hue,
Finding thy worth a limit past my praise,
And therefore art enforced to seek anew
Some fresher stamp of the time-bettering days.
And do so, love; yet when they have devised
What strainèd touches rhetoric can lend,
Thou, truly fair, wert truly sympathized
In true, plain words, by thy true-telling friend.
And their gross painting might be better used
Where cheeks need blood: in thee it is abused.

8 the] Q; these OXFORD time-bettering] Q (time^ bettering)

1 **painting need** have need of make-up, continuing the argument of *82*.13–14

2 **to . . . set** added no rhetorical ornamentation to your beauty

4 **barren tender** worthless offer to repay a debt. *Tender* is used in the legal sense 'An offer of money, or the like, in discharge of a debt or liability, *esp.* an offer which thus fulfils the terms of the law and of the liability' (*OED* 1b).

5 **your report** singing your praises. *Report* is used in *OED* sense 3b: 'Testimony *to*, or commendation of, a person or quality'.

6 **extant** (a) still alive; (b) prominent; (c) 'Continuing to exist; that has escaped the ravages of time, still existing' (*OED* 4b). The friend is like a marvel from antiquity which still exists, making efforts by a *modern quill* to represent it inadequate.

7 **modern** is commonly used to imply inferiority of the modern to the ancient, hence Shakespeare's regular use of it to connote 'trite'. A scornful defiance of the 'modern Laureates of this later age' is also voiced in E.C.'s *Emaricdulfe* (1595), 23.1.

8 **what worth** of that worth which

9 **impute** consider as a sin (*OED* 1a). *OED* 2 *Theol.*, 'To attribute or ascribe (righteousness, guilt, etc.) *to* a person by vicarious substitution', also may register, according to which the friend is regarded as a God who arbitrarily determines the merits and demerits of the poet.

11 **For I . . . being mute** Unlike others who detract from your virtues by reducing them to the level of mere rhetoric, I do not diminish your beauty because I say nothing.

12 **When . . . tomb** whereas others attempt to immortalize you in verse, and only succeed in burying you in a monument of pompous rhetoric. Compare the *monument* of praise built by Shakespeare's verse in *81*.9.

14 **both your poets** presumably refers to Shakespeare plus the rival, but it could conceivably refer to two rivals.

83

I never saw that you did painting need,
And therefore to your fair no painting set.
I found (or thought I found) you did exceed
The barren tender of a poet's debt;
And therefore have I slept in your report,
That you yourself being extant might well show
How far a modern quill doth come too short,
Speaking of worth, what worth in you doth grow.
This silence for my sin you did impute,
Which shall be most my glory, being dumb:
For I impair not beauty, being mute,
When others would give life, and bring a tomb.
There lives more life in one of your fair eyes
Than both your poets can in praise devise.

1 **Who . . . most** what extravagant eulogist. *Which* is a relative pronoun with *Who* as its antecedent.

2 **you,** Some editors end the line with a question mark (often these are used in Q only once after a string of separate questions, e.g. at *8*.1–4). This would turn *whose* in l. 3 from a relative pronoun which refers to the friend into an indefinite pronoun. This emendation is undesirable, since the imagery of ll. 3–4 recalls terms which earlier in the sequence had been applied to the friend (see next note).

3–4 **In . . . grew?** 'within whose boundaries the abundance is enclosed which is the only possible source of someone who might be equal to you in birth'. There is a faint reprise of the procreation sonnets here: the friend jealously guards the one place in which his equal, i.e. his heir, could be found. *Immurèd* connotes imprisonment or protective custody, and is a word which enters the language in the late 1580s. In conjunction with *grew* it may suggest a walled garden or an environment of protective horticulture. Barnabe Barnes uses the word in an allegory which compares his mistress to an enclosed orchard 'Immured in steely walls of chaste desire', *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* Elegy 12.22.

5 **Lean penury** stingy poverty, which refuses to *lend* any of the little it has to the friend

8 **so . . . story.** in this way ennobles his writing. Some editors replace Q's full stop with a comma, taking *So* as anticipating a result clause ('So . . . that') beginning with *Let*. Q does sometimes punctuate over-strongly at the end of quatrains, but here the unit of sense appears to be completed with *story*.

10 **clear** (a) self-evident; (b) famous (from the Latin *claris*); (c) lustrous, shining

11 **counterpart** mimetic image of the friend. This sense of *counterpart*, 'A person or thing so answering to another as to appear a duplicate or exact copy of it' (*OED* 3 *fig.*), is not acknowledged by *OED* before 1680.

fame his wit make his poetic skill famous. (Transitive uses of 'fame' are rare.)

14 **fond on** fond of, perhaps with a suggestion of 'being foolishly besotted with'. Cf. *Dream* 2.1.265–6: 'Effect it with some care, that he may prove | More fond on her than she upon her love'.

Being . . . worse (a) being excessively eager to be praised, which makes the kind of praise you receive deteriorate in quality (by making it become hyperbolic); (b) being excessively eager to be praised, which devalues the praise you give; (c) being fond of lavishing praise on others, which devalues the praise you give; (d) being fond of lavishing praise on others, which makes the kind of praise you receive deteriorate in quality. In (a) and (b) the friend is presented as unable through vanity to ensure that praise retains its true value; in (c) and (d) he is presented as an indiscriminate critic of works which praise him. *Your praises* is either a subjective genitive ('the praises you give') or an objective genitive ('the praises given to you').

84

Who is it that says most, which can say more
Than this rich praise: that you alone are you,
In whose confine immurèd is the store
Which should example where your equal grew?
Lean penury within that pen doth dwell,
That to his subject lends not some small glory,
But he that writes of you, if he can tell
That you are you, so dignifies his story.
Let him but copy what in you is writ,
Not making worse what nature made so clear,
And such a counterpart shall fame his wit,
Making his style admirèd everywhere.
    You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,
    Being fond on praise, which makes your praises worse.

1 **in manners** within the bounds of social decorum

2 **comments** 'An expository treatise, an exposition; a commentary' (*OED* 1)

3 **Reserve . . . quill** hoard away their writings in incorruptible gold. *Reserve* means 'To keep for future use or enjoyment' (*OED* 1a). *Character* is used in the sense: 'The style of writing peculiar to any individual; handwriting' (*OED* 4c). These senses make many of the proposed emendations (see collation) unnecessary. Given the frequency with which Q mistakes 'thy' for 'their' (see *26*.12 n.), however, it is impossible to exclude the possibility that the copy read 'Reserve thy character', or perhaps 'Reserve your character', which would be in accord with *your praise* in l. 2. These readings would mean 'preserve your nature, or an imprint of you'. It might also widen the sense of *character* to include a form of short sketch of a particular kind of disposition made popular in the early seventeenth century by the vogue for Theophrastus's *Characters*.
filed polished. A term often used in the period for literary artifice. On the unique form in Q, 'fil'd', see *17*.2 n.

5 **other** The use of the indefinite 'other' for 'others' is a recognized Elizabethan usage, deriving from the loss of the masculine plural inflection -e in Middle English (Partridge, 117).

6 **unlettered clerk** illiterate cleric in minor orders, who cannot read the lesson, so joins in with 'Amen'. Parish clerks led the responses to the priest in church. Cf. *Richard II* 4.1.163–4: 'God save the King! Will no man say "Amen"? | Am I both priest and clerk? Well then, Amen.'

7 **that able spirit affords** which any able person might offer you. *That* may be a demonstrative pronoun referring to a particular *able spirit*, the rival poet, who is referred to as a *spirit* also at *80*.2 and *86*.5.

8 **In polished . . . pen** 'Polite letters' are originally the same as 'polished letters' or those which have been carefully revised, written in fair hand, and smoothed with pumice-stone (hence *filed*). The aim of the sonnet is to imply that style and substance have collapsed together in a uniform glossiness in the work of the rival poet: it is impossible to distinguish the content of the verse from its elegant calligraphy.

10 **most of praise** highest pitch of praise

12 **Though . . . before** as in a formal procession my words are the last and lowliest, but my thoughts are by their strength and value in the vanguard. Q's 'hind-most' re-emphasizes the point: the one who comes be*hind* in fact loves *most*.

14 **in effect** in action. Compare the proverb 'The effect speaks, the tongue need not' (Tilley E64).

85

My tongue-tied Muse in manners holds her still,
While comments of your praise, richly compiled,
Reserve their character with golden quill
And precious phrase by all the Muses filed.
I think good thoughts, whilst other write good words,
And like unlettered clerk still cry 'Amen'
To every hymn that able spirit affords,
In polished form of well-refinèd pen.
Hearing you praised, I say ' 'Tis so, 'tis true',
And to the most of praise add something more,
But that is in my thought, whose love to you
(Though words come hindmost) holds his rank before.
  Then others for the breath of words respect;
  Me for my dumb thoughts, speaking in effect.

3 Reserve their] Q; Preserve their GILDON 1714; Rehearse your *conj.* Anon. in Cambridge; Reserve your *conj.* Anon. in Cambridge 1893 4 filed] Q (fil'd); filled GILDON 9 ' 'Tis . . . true',] MALONE (*italic*); ^~ . . . ~^, Q

1 **proud full sail** Cf. the nautical comparison of *80*.5–14. On the association of poetic rivals with pride, see 76.1 n.

2 **prize** reward; often used of the spoils brought back from voyages by travellers to the new world
all-too-precious In Q's '(all to precious)' the brackets probably indicate a compound adjective rather than a parenthesis.

3 **ripe** matured and ready for birth
inhearse entomb

4 **womb** The shift from the *sail* of l. 1 to the *womb* of l. 4 makes visual sense (both swell; one with wind, the other with new life), a comparison also found in *Dream* 2.1.128–9: 'When we have laughed to see the sails conceive | And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind'.

5 **Was it . . . write** No specific allusion is obvious, but George Chapman claims in *Euthemiae Raptae* (1609), ll. 75–85, to have been inspired by the spirit of Homer to translate his works. For other candidates, see Rollins 2, ii, Appendix 10.
spirit is monosyllabic (cf. *80*.2 and *85*.7), *spirits* disyllabic. *Spirit* ranges in meaning from 'vigour of mind' to 'supernatural agency', or 'daemon'. It is used often in Marlowe's *Dr Faustus* to mean 'devil'. Chapman's translation of the *Iliad* (1598–?1614) exploits this range of senses to the full. See Colin Burrow, *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford, 1993), 206–10. Editors since Ingram and Redpath have sought to de-spiritualize the relationship between the poet and his *spirits* by arguing that the term could refer to a coterie of fellow writers or to the great writers of the past. None of the 24 senses of 'spirit' in the *OED* supports this interpretation.

6 **pitch** 'The height to which a falcon or other bird of prey soars before swooping down on its prey' (*OED* 18a), as in *2 Henry VI (Contention)* 2.1.12: 'And bears his thoughts above his falcon's pitch.'

7 **compeers** 'A companion, associate, comrade, fellow' (*OED* 2). Here either 'literary cronies' or 'spiritual instructors'. The word can be used contemptuously, as in Jonson's *The Alchemist* 4.6.41: 'Your sooty, smoky-bearded compeer'.

8 **astonishèd** stunned into silence

9 **affable familiar ghost** This yokes together the domestic and the spiritual: *affable* means 'friendly, conversible', as can *familiar* (*OED* 7). The phrases 'familiar angel' and 'familiar devil, or spirit', however, refer to supernatural beings supposed to be in association with or under the power of a human agent. A *familiar ghost* need not be sinister, however, and could be something like a guardian angel: Nicholas Udall, in his *Apothegmes of Erasmus* (1542), a work often used in Tudor grammar schools, notes that 'Socrates said that he had a familiar ghost or Angel peculiar and proper to himself, of whom he was by a privy token forbidden if he attempted . . . any unhonest thing' (32).

10 **gulls . . . intelligence** 'tricks him with (false) information'. *Gull* could conceivably mean 'stuff, engorge' (*OED v.*[1] 2). At this point in the sonnet, however, the rival is represented as the gullible receiver of what he fondly imagines to be useful information from the spirit world.

13 **countenance** (a) face; (b) 'Patronage; appearance of favour' (*OED* 8). A similar play is apparent in *1 Henry IV* 1.2.27–9: 'being governed, as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal'.
filled up Q's 'fild up' has been modernized by Malone as 'filed up', or 'polished'. This is unlikely: there is no recognized early modern usage of 'filed up'. See also *17*.2 n.

14 **that enfeebled mine** (a) that fact (either my lack of matter or the rival's enjoyment of the friend's patronage) enfeebled my verse; (b) that line (by the rival)

86

Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,
Bound for the prize of all-too-precious you,
That did my ripe thoughts in my brain inhearse,
Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew?
Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write
Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead?
No, neither he, nor his compeers by night
Giving him aid, my verse astonishèd.
He, nor that affable familiar ghost
Which nightly gulls him with intelligence,
As victors of my silence cannot boast:
I was not sick of any fear from thence.
But, when your countenance filled up his line,
Then lacked I matter, that enfeebled mine.

13 filled] Q (fild); fil'd MALONE (*conj.* Steevens)

1 **dear** (a) lovely; (b) expensive
possessing (a) control over or tenure (see *18*.10 n. and *OED* s.v. 'possession' 1b: '*Law*. The visible possibility of exercising over a thing such control as attaches to lawful ownership (but which may also exist apart from lawful ownership))'; (b) exclusive loving ownership

2 **like enough** likely enough. There is a sardonic edge here ('and don't you just know it').
estimate (a) value to me ('The price at which anything is rated; *fig.* attributed value' (*OED* 1b)); possibly also (b) 'Repute, reputation' (*OED* 1c).

3 **charter of thy worth** (a) royally sanctioned document establishing the friend's material value; (b) royally sanctioned document establishing the friend's special legal privileges. The friend's *charter* in the sense 'a document which conveys title to land', established by agreement between him and the poet, *gives him releasing* because the poet can no longer meet its terms (he is *too dear*, i.e. too costly). The friend's *charter* in the sense 'privilege, immunity' gives him the absolute power to release himself from the quasi-contractual agreement with the poet because of his *worth* in the sense of 'high and privileged status'.
releasing (a) freedom from the obligations of love; (b) technical legal dispensation from contractual obligations. The legal resonances of 'release' in the period are strong: they range from 'withdraw, recall, revoke, cancel (a sentence, punishment, condition, etc.)' (*OED* 1), through 'grant remission or discharge of . . . a debt, tax, tribute' (*OED* 3), to 'surrender, make over, transfer (land or territory) to another' (*OED* 4b), the last of which continues the dominant metaphor of the quatrain, that of contracts which establish the tenure of land.

4 **My bonds . . . determinate** (a) my claims to ownership of you have all expired; (b) my ties of obligation to you have expired. These two senses conflict: the poet is attempting both voluntarily to forgo the friend, and to suggest that the friend has dissolved their mutually binding agreement. Depending on which way one reads the line it either supports or conflicts with the previous one. *Bonds* means 'a deed, by which A (known as the *obligor*) binds himself, his heirs, executors, or assigns to pay a certain sum of money to B (known as the *obligee*), or his heirs, etc. A may bind himself to this payment absolutely and unconditionally, in which case the deed is known as a *single or simple bond* (*simplex obligatio*): bonds in this form are obsolete. Or a condition may be attached that the deed shall be made void by the payment, by a certain date, of money, rent, etc. due from A to B, or by some other performance or observance, the sum named being only a penalty to enforce the performance of the condition, in which case the deed is termed a *penal bond*' (*OED* 9a). It is likely that a penal bond is referred to here, with the service referred to having been fulfilled. For Shakespeare's awareness of this distinction, see *Merchant* 1.3.143–4: 'Go with me to a notary, seal me there | Your single bond'. *Determinate*, or 'determine', is used of the expiry of a legal instrument.

5 **how . . . granting** what claim do I have to possess you except that which is given to me by you? The friend is presented as the overlord from whom Shakespeare receives his temporary grant of possession (*OED* s.v. 'hold' 6a).

7 **cause** (a) merit which warrants; (b) adequate grounds for (as in law, having a *cause* for an action)

8 **patent** privileged right granted by you (*patents*—effectively monopolies—to sell particular goods, such as wines, were granted in this period as marks of royal favour, until the 1623 Statutes of Monopolies abolished the practice)
swerving reverting to you. (The word does not have particular legal charge.)

9–10 'At the time when you granted the patent you were unaware of your own value, or were mistaken about my identity or worth.' The suggestion is that since the supposed contract was made in error it should be dissolved.

11 **upon misprision growing** occurring as a result of error or oversight

12 **Comes . . . making** reverts back to you on the making of a properly informed judgement. The sense is clear although the precise grammatical relations of *making* are obscure. It functions as a participle agreeing with 'you' (understood), or with 'gift', which is presented metaphorically as a kind of prodigal son, which makes a mistake and then returns home. It also functions as a quasi-compound noun, 'judgement-making'.

13–14 **Thus . . . matter** So I have possessed you as in a self-deceptive dream: while I was asleep I dreamed I was a king who

87

Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou know'st thy estimate.
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing:
My bonds in thee are all determinate.
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting,
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
And so my patent back again is swerving.
Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,
Or me, to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking;
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
Comes home again, on better judgement making.
  Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter:
  In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.

owned all, but when I awoke I realized I was no such thing.' There is also a suggestion of disillusionment: 'in my dreams *you* were a king'.

1 **set me light** (a) value me at a low rate; (b) regard me as fickle
2 **And . . . scorn** hold my deserts up to public contempt
3 Compare 35.10.
4 **though** both 'even though you are' and 'if (hypothetically) you were to be'. This masks a direct accusation as a piece of speculative hyperbole.
forsworn perjured; used especially of those who have broken vows of love
5 **With . . . acquainted** since I know more about my failings than anyone else
6 **Upon thy part** on your side, to strengthen your case. It is possible to take the phrase with *faults concealed* in the next line: so 'I can tell a story about hidden faults on your side too'.
7 **attainted** (a) tainted, stained; (b) found guilty of a criminal offence. These two senses were associated as a result of a false etymology which derived 'attainder' from French *taindre*, dye or stain.
8 **losing me** Q reads 'loosing', which is the usual spelling of 'losing' (only in *125*.6 is the verb spelt 'lose' rather than 'loose'). Here, though, Q's form allows a secondary sense, 'loosing', i.e. 'in setting me free'.
shall occurs where one would normally expect 'shalt', but the use of plural for singular form is not unusual.
10 **bending . . . on** turning towards
12 **double vantage me** do me a double advantage. That is, the poet will benefit twice by slandering himself: once because it will require him to think of the friend (ll. 9–10), and once because any benefit done to the friend will also benefit the poet, since the two lovers are one.
13 **so** (a) so completely; (b) in such a way
14 **That for thy right** (a) in order to assist your case; (b) in order to present you as virtuous (although you are not)
bear all wrong (a) put up with all injustice; (b) take the responsibility for all wrongdoing

88

When thou shalt be disposed to set me light,
And place my merit in the eye of scorn,
Upon thy side against myself I'll fight,
And prove thee virtuous, though thou art forsworn.
With mine own weakness being best acquainted,
Upon thy part I can set down a story
Of faults concealed, wherein I am attainted,
That thou in losing me shall win much glory.
And I by this will be a gainer too,
For bending all my loving thoughts on thee:
The injuries that to myself I do,
Doing thee vantage, double vantage me.
  Such is my love, to thee I so belong,
  That for thy right myself will bear all wrong.

1 disposed] BENSON; dispode Q 8 losing] Q (loosing)

1 **Say** 'suppose' rather than the ordinary sense. Compare *88*.4 for the equivocation: this first line both imagines a future hypothetical circumstance, and allows the reading 'suppose that the reason why you have forsaken me (as you have done) is some fault in me'.
fault crime or failing

3 **straight will halt** 'immediately will limp'. Some biographical critics have supposed Shakespeare to be lame on the basis of this line and 37.3; the suggestion is however that the poet will accept whatever the friend says as truth, and act accordingly. *Lame* may play on the sense 'poetically weak': Drayton's *Idea's Mirrour* (1594), 12.7 explores the miracle that 'a cripple hand' is 'made to write, yet lame by kind' as a result of Idea's beauty.

4 **reasons** arguments

6 **To set . . . change** in order to give an appearance of decorous normality to the separation for which you wish

7 **As I'll . . . will** as I will do myself down, knowing what it is you want. *Will* may carry a sexual sense, 'knowing what new thing you lust after'.

8 **acquaintance strangle** suppress all signs of our knowing each other. *Acquaintance* may have a distinctive homosocial resonance: the frontispiece to Richard Brathwait's *The English Gentleman* (1630) presents two men hugging each other as an emblem of acquaintance, and glosses: 'Acquaintance is in two bodies individually incorporated, and no less selfly than sociably united: two twins cannot be more near than these be affectionately dear, which they express in hugging one another'. For the use of *strangle* compare *Winter's Tale* 4.4.47–8: 'Strangle such thoughts as these with anything | That you behold the while'.
strange unfamiliar, as though I do not know you

9 **walks** 'The usual place of walking, the haunt or resort (of a person or animal)' (*OED* 8a). Also perhaps implying absence from the estate of the friend, via 'A place prepared or set apart for walking' (*OED* 9).

11 **too much profane** The uncorrected state of Q reads 'proface'. This is likely to be a misprint, although 'proface' could be used as a 'formula of welcome or good wishes at a dinner or other meal, equivalent to "may it do you good", "may it be to your advantage"' (*OED*), and mean 'excessively eager with my greetings'.

13 **debate** 'Strife, contention, dissension, quarrelling, wrangling; a quarrel' (*OED* 1a)

89

Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault,
And I will comment upon that offence.
Speak of my lameness, and I straight will halt,
Against thy reasons making no defence.
Thou canst not (love) disgrace me half so ill,
To set a form upon desirèd change,
As I'll myself disgrace, knowing thy will.
I will acquaintance strangle and look strange,
Be absent from thy walks, and in my tongue
Thy sweet belovèd name no more shall dwell,
Lest I (too much profane) should do it wrong,
And haply of our old acquaintance tell.
For thee, against myself, I'll vow debate;
For I must ne'er love him whom thou dost hate.

11 profane] QB; proface QA

1 **Then** therefore
2 **bent my deeds to cross** determined to oppose me in all that I do
3 **bow** assume a posture of abject submission
4 **drop in for an after-loss** probably 'fall upon me as an additional loss to come at a later date'. 'Drop in' is used in this sense in *Antony* 3.13.164. The sonnet appeals (with the mock bravura of a wounded lover) to the friend to leave now, so that all catastrophes come at once. *Drop in* is unlikely to bear the sense given by *OED* (27b: 'to pay a casual visit'), a usage which became common only at the end of the seventeenth century. If the passage meant 'and (worst of all) do not stop by for a chat' it would be pure bathos.
5–6 **when . . . woe** Once I have endured my present hardships, do not come as the general leading a rearguard attack by an army of sorrow which I had thought was conquered.
7 **Give not . . . morrow** It was proverbial that 'A blustering night [promises] a good morrow', *Lucrece* ll. 1788–90 and Dent N166; cf. 'Next the dark night the glad morrow' (Dent N173.1). If the friend leaves after the 'windy night' he will thwart the expectation of a sunny day following.
8 **To . . . overthrow** to protract an intended destruction
11 **onset** first assault. The noun is often used of military attacks (*OED* 1a). Compare *Lucrece* l. 432.
13 **strains** (a) mental impulses, stresses; (b) types

90

Then hate me when thou wilt, if ever, now,
Now, while the world is bent my deeds to cross,
Join with the spite of Fortune, make me bow,
And do not drop in for an after-loss.
Ah do not, when my heart hath 'scaped this sorrow,
Come in the rearward of a conquered woe;
Give not a windy night a rainy morrow
To linger out a purposed overthrow.
If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,
When other petty griefs have done their spite,
But in the onset come, so shall I taste
At first the very worst of Fortune's might,
And other strains of woe, which now seem woe,
Compared with loss of thee, will not seem so.

11 shall] BENSON; stall Q

1–4 **Some . . . Some** The fourfold *anaphora* (repetition at the start of the line) prepares for the strongly contrastive *But* in l. 7.

3 **new-fangled ill** shoddily made, although after the most recent fashion

4 **horse** horses (although many noblemen, such as Bourbon in *Henry V* 3.7.20–3, had a favourite horse)

5 **every humour . . . pleasure** Each type of person has their own peculiar pursuit. *Humour* refers to a person's disposition, as determined by the relative balance of the four humours (blood, phlegm, melancholy, and choler) in their bodies. *Adjunct* is probably used in a quasi-logical sense, 'Something joined to or connected with another, and subordinate to it in position, function, character, or essence' (*OED* 1). It may also anticipate the sense 'A personal addition or enhancement; a quality increasing a man's native worth' (*OED* 3). *OED*'s first cited instance of this sense is from Healey's translation of St Augustine's *City of God* (1610), a work which was being set in Eld's print-shop at roughly the same time as the Sonnets.

7 **particulars** (a) single things; (b) merely personal preferences; limited selfish interests such as those listed in the quatrain

are not my measure (a) are not equal to me; (b) are not the scale of measurement to apply to me; (c) are not the scale of measurement which I use. In the following lines (c) is developed: the friend makes all other ways of assessing goods and pleasures seem inadequate.

8 **better** overgo

general best all-encompassing source of delight

9 **better** Q's 'bitter' is a common misprint in the period, occurring (for example) in the 1614 edition of Gorges's translation of Lucan's *Pharsalia* in which Thorpe had a hand. That the friend's high rank is also a source of bitterness is almost certainly a tangy coincidence.

10 **prouder than garments' cost** more grandly impressive than the rich display of garments. For a similar use of *cost*, see 64.2. Although *garments* on its own does not connote expense, clothes (especially the aristocratic cast-offs which found their way into the wardrobes of theatrical companies) were extraordinarily expensive: Edward Alleyn records that a single 'black velvet cloak with sleeves embroidered in silver and gold' cost £20 10*s*. 6*d*. (Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574–1642*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1980), 178.)

12 **of all men's pride** the object of every man's envious respect. *Pride* is used in the sense 'That of which any person or body of persons is proud' (*OED* 5a); its conjunction with *boast* and *prouder* brings to it a colour of vainglory.

13 **wretched** unfortunate

91

Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,
Some in their wealth, some in their body's force,
Some in their garments, though new-fangled ill,
Some in their hawks and hounds, some in their horse.
And every humour hath his adjunct pleasure
Wherein it finds a joy above the rest;
But these particulars are not my measure,
All these I better in one general best.
Thy love is better than high birth to me,
Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' cost,
Of more delight than hawks or horses be:
And, having thee, of all men's pride I boast,
  Wretched in this alone: that thou mayst take
  All this away, and me most wretched make.

9 better] BENSON; bitter Q

1 **But do thy worst** even if you try your hardest. The phrase plays on 'do your best'.
steal thyself away (a) rob me of yourself; (b) sneak furtively away

2 **For term . . . mine** you are contracted to me as long as life lasts. *Assurèd* can mean 'Engaged, covenanted, pledged' (*OED* 3) or, more strongly, 'Engaged for marriage, betrothed' (*OED* 4), as in *Errors* 3.2.145–6: 'this drudge or diviner laid claim to me, called me Dromio, swore I was assured to her'. This sense is reinforced by the echo of the Solemnization of Matrimony from the Book of Common Prayer: 'to have and to hold from this day forward . . . till death us do part'. *Term* is also a word used to describe the period of legal possession of land etc. (*OED* 6).

5 **the worst of wrongs** i.e. the loss of the friend

6 **the least of them** i.e. the slightest hint of coolness will kill him, so he is not dependent on the whims of the friend, since he will die at once if he loses his affection.

8 **humour** (a) whim; (b) mental constitution (see 91.5 n.).

9–10 **Thou . . . lie** You cannot trouble me with your inconstancy, because my life hangs on your change of heart. In other words the poet will not feel the effects of the friend's fickleness, since he will die the moment he is abandoned.

11 **title** 'Legal right to the possession of property' (*OED* 7 *spec. Law* a), referring back to the *term* and the implied contract at the start of the poem. *Happy* means 'fortunate' here, and 'joyful' in the next line. The *title* is *happy* (fortunate) in that the poet can never be unhappy as a result of it: either he lives, and enjoys the favour of the friend, or he dies, and so does not experience the sorrow of his disfavour.

13 **But . . . blot?** What is so beautiful or fortunate that it fears no contamination of its perfection? The line initially refers to the poet's happy state; once the second line of the couplet is read it refers also to the friend. The point of the couplet is that if the friend is secretly, rather than openly, untrue the poet will not find release in death from unhappiness, and will live on like the *deceivèd husband* at the start of the next sonnet.

92

But do thy worst to steal thyself away,
For term of life thou art assurèd mine,
And life no longer than thy love will stay,
For it depends upon that love of thine.
Then need I not to fear the worst of wrongs,
When in the least of them my life hath end.
I see a better state to me belongs
Than that which on thy humour doth depend.
Thou canst not vex me with inconstant mind,
Since that my life on thy revolt doth lie.
O, what a happy title do I find,
Happy to have thy love, happy to die!
But what's so blessèd fair that fears no blot?
Thou mayst be false, and yet I know it not.

1 **So . . . true** In this way I shall live on believing you to be true. Continues the argument of *92*. *Supposing* straddles the boundary between the involuntary belief of one who is deceived ('to believe as a fact' (*OED* s.v. 'suppose' 1a)) and the voluntary act of one who wishes to entertain a hypothesis ('To assume (without reference to truth or falsehood) as a basis of argument' (*OED* s.v. 'suppose' 6)).

2 **so** (a) in this way; (b) in order that. Sense (b) reinforces the suggestion of *supposing*, that the poet is deliberately deceiving himself.

3 **altered new** turned into a new form. The phrase puts a brave face on deception.

5 **For** since. It looks both forward and back: it explains why the friend's *looks* are *with me*, and gives the precondition of *therefore* in l. 6.

6 **in that** in your eye
change inconstancy, change of heart

8 **moods** bad humour, anger

9 **in** at

11 **heart's workings** the movements of your emotions

12 **should** follows from *that* in l. 10, but almost also suggests that the poet is advising the friend how best to deceive him.

13 **Eve's apple** 'So the woman (seeing that the tree was good for meat, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to get knowledge) took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her and he did eat', Genesis 3: 6. Adam is of course the original *deceivèd husband*. Compare the proverb 'An apple may be fair without and bad within' (Dent A291.1).
grow (a) become; (b) flourish like a specious fruit on a tree

14 **sweet virtue . . . show** (a) if your beautiful moral worth does not correspond to your appearance; (b) if your sweet-tasting medicinal effect does not match your delicious appearance (*OED* s.v. 'virtue' 9b)

93

So shall I live, supposing thou art true,
Like a deceivèd husband, so love's face
May still seem love to me, though altered new:
Thy looks with me, thy heart in other place.
For there can live no hatred in thine eye,
Therefore in that I cannot know thy change.
In many's looks the false heart's history
Is writ in moods and frowns and wrinkles strange;
But heaven in thy creation did decree
That in thy face sweet loves should ever dwell.
Whate'er thy thoughts, or thy heart's workings be,
Thy looks should nothing thence but sweetness tell.
How like Eve's apple doth thy beauty grow,
If thy sweet virtue answer not thy show.

1 **They . . . none** Praise is often given in the period to those who withhold the full effects of their authority, as in Sidney, *Arcadia* (1590), 246: 'the more power he hath to hurt, the more admirable is his praise, that he will not hurt', and Dent H170.

2 **That . . . show** that do not do what it seems likely from their appearance they will do. The initial commonplace is pulled towards duplicitousness by this line: it suggests two positive qualities and one negative: (a) powerful people who do not act with the power which they appear to possess; (b) people who do not act on their emotions but merely show them; (c) people who duplicitously present an outward face which does not correspond to their actions. Sense (c) is likely to spring quickly to a reader's mind as a result of the poem's position in a group of poems which meditate on what it is to be deceived in love.

3 **moving others . . . stone** (a) who retain a laudable immobility as they cause movement in others; (b) who remain unemotional whilst generating emotion in others; (c) who remain insensible and culpably cool whilst they give rise to emotion in others. The next line pushes this description, which is almost that of a Stoic sage who controls his passions, towards the hostility implicit in (c). The effect is of a desperate search for terms of praise with which to describe someone who has caused only pain. The proverbs 'As steadfast as a stone' (Dent S878.2) and 'As cold as any stone' (Dent S876) are also both in play.

4 **to temptation slow** resistant to temptation (hence a good thing); but *slow* can imply culpable deficiency ('constitutionally inert or sluggish' (*OED* 2a))

5 **They rightly . . . graces** (a) people who resist temptation and suppress their passions deservedly come to possess the grace of God (*inherit*: 'To come into possession of, as one's right or divinely assigned portion', often in biblical contexts, as Tyndale's translation of Matthew 25: 34: 'Come ye blessed children of my father, inherit ye the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world'); (b) people who are unsusceptible to passion really are the ones who deserve to receive heavenly beauty (with a sarcastic stress). Here the carefully modulated tonal instability of the poem reaches its climax: the line is a confession, trembling with hard-assumed orthodoxy, of a moral truth in spite of the pain it costs to utter; it also bitterly acknowledges that beauty is often found in the stonily insensible.

6 **husband . . . expense** prevent the squandering of natural beauties

7–8 **They . . . excellence** The opposition is between those who own and are therefore in complete control of the goods of a household (*lords and owners*) and those who are merely administrators of a household economy (*stewards of their excellence*). *Faces* can be neutral in sense: 'The countenance as expressive of feeling or character' (*OED* 6a), although the plural may carry a suggestion that the presentation of emotion is voluntary, as in *Cymbeline* 1.1.13–14: 'they wear their faces to the bent | Of the King's looks'. The word can also suggest shamelessness or hypocrisy: 'Command of countenance, *esp.* with reference to freedom from indications of shame' (*OED* 7a), and 'Outward show; assumed or factitious appearance' (*OED* 10a).

8 **their excellence** The antecedent of *their* could be either *others* or *lords and owners*. The former would suggest that other people only have temporary control over the management of whatever qualities they have, but it would at least grant them some *excellence* of their own. The latter would suggest a greater distinction between the two classes of people: that all other people apart from *the lords and owners of their faces* have nothing at all to call their own, and simply administer, like stewards, an estate which they could never hope to own. This is reinforced by the echo of the phrase 'your excellence' which is often used in addressing social superiors in the period.

9 **flower** The shift from the ethical concerns of the octet to this image makes perhaps the most pronounced *volta* (or turn in the argument between the octet and sestet) in the Sonnets. The shift skirts around the unutterable: that the friend's deeds are unbearably at odds with his face. This suggestion is made in ll. 9–10 by recalling the friend's refusal to breed from earlier in the sequence and then in l. 11 adding *infection* to the sweet flowers with which the friend is habitually associated.

10 **to itself** (a) by itself; (b) for its own benefit

11 **infection** disease, also 'Moral contamination; vitiation of character or habits by evil influences' (*OED* 6)

94

They that have power to hurt and will do none,
That do not do the thing they most do show,
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
Unmovèd, cold, and to temptation slow:
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces,
And husband nature's riches from expense.
They are the lords and owners of their faces,
Others but stewards of their excellence.
The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself it only live and die,
But if that flower with base infection meet,
The basest weed outbraves his dignity:
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

12 **outbraves** surpasses, especially in looks, as in the Preface to Gerard's *Herbal* (1597): 'The lilies of the field outbraved him'.

14 **Lilies . . . weeds** Compare the proverb 'The best things corrupted become the worst' (Dent C668). Lilies were thought to produce a foul smell if handled: 'The lily flower smelleth full sweet, while it is whole and not broken, and stinketh full foul if it be broken and froted [chafed] with hands', *Batman upon Bartholomew* (1582), fo. 300^{v}. The same line occurs in *Edward III* (1596, containing scenes thought to be by Shakespeare), 2.1.451. Cf. Dent L297.

1 **sweet** sweet-smelling (only)

3 **budding name?** your reputation which is just approaching its prime. The pointing of Q's rhetorical question has been retained in order to differentiate it from the exclamation mark which ends the following line. On exclamation marks in Q see *48*.4 n.

7–8 **Cannot . . . report** Q's punctuation is followed here, although many editors place a semicolon after *praise*. In Q's version the subject of *blesses* is either *Naming* or *tongue* and *but in a kind of praise* qualifies either *blesses* or *dispraise*.

8 **Naming . . . report** simply mentioning the friend's name gives a gloss of praise to a critical account of his doings

9 **mansion** glorious abode (i.e. the friend's body)

11 **blot** On the high moral charge of this word in Shakespeare, see *36*.3 n.

12 **turns to** transforms to. (The subject of the verb is *beauty's veil*.)
see! Q's exclamation mark may serve to emphasize the carefully limited praise of *that eyes can see*.

13 **large privilege** extensive freedom granted particularly to you

14 **The hardest . . . edge** has a proverbial ring, but has only distant recorded parallels (as 'Iron with often handling is worn to nothing', Dent I92). Compare Nashe, *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*, Nashe, ii.37: 'No sword but will lose his edge in long striking against stones'. Swords and penises are so commonly associated in the period that there may well be a sexual pun here.

95

How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame,
Which, like a canker in the fragrant rose,
Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name?
O, in what sweets dost thou thy sins enclose!
That tongue that tells the story of thy days
(Making lascivious comments on thy sport)
Cannot dispraise, but in a kind of praise,
Naming thy name blesses an ill report.
O, what a mansion have those vices got,
Which for their habitation chose out thee,
Where beauty's veil doth cover every blot,
And all things turns to fair that eyes can see!
Take heed (dear heart) of this large privilege:
The hardest knife ill-used doth lose his edge.

7 praise,] Q; ~; MALONE (*conj.* Capell) 8 name^] MALONE; ~, Q 12 turns] Q; turn SEWELL

2 **Some . . . sport** Some say that your distinctive charm lies in youth and elegant recreation. *Anaphora* (repetition of the same phrase at the start of the line) and *parison* (the use of parallel grammatical structures) create an equivalence between the terms of praise and condemnation which are notionally being distinguished. *Grace* and *gentle* are used frequently of the friend. They both connote aristocratic ease and mild winningness.

3 **of more and less** by both high- and low-born people

4 **that to thee resort** which frequent your company. *Resort* is often used on occasions when the protection or advice of a superior (a king or a God) is sought. The transforming magic of the friend's presence is registered in the syntax: *that* refers either to *graces* or to *faults*.

8 **translated** transformed
for true things deemed are judged to be virtues. This is the only occurrence in Shakespeare of 'to deem *for*'. This form detracts from the stability of *deem* (which usually means 'to decide with the finality of a judge') by recalling the phrase 'to take for', which usually means 'to *mis*take something for'. Hence almost 'are mistakenly thought to be virtues'.

9 **stern** 'grim, harsh' (*OED* 1d)

10 **If like . . . translate** if he could metamorphose himself into a lamb. A wolf in sheep's clothing is a proverbial example of hypocrisy (Dent W614).

11 **lead away** here 'mislead'

12 **strength . . . state** full unqualified power of your position. Cf. *94*.1–2.

13–14 **But do . . . report** The same couplet occurs at the end of *36*. It fits less neatly here, and textual corruption or incomplete authorial revision cannot be ruled out. Kerrigan notes that both *36* and this poem end groups of sonnets which are critical of the friend: 'The common couplet makes the two groups rhyme, as it were'.

96

Some say thy fault is youth, some wantonness,
Some say thy grace is youth and gentle sport.
Both grace and faults are loved of more and less:
Thou mak'st faults graces, that to thee resort.
As on the finger of a thronèd queen
The basest jewel will be well esteemed,
So are those errors that in thee are seen
To truths translated, and for true things deemed.
How many lambs might the stern wolf betray,
If like a lamb he could his looks translate?
How many gazers mightst thou lead away,
If thou wouldst use the strength of all thy state?
But do not so; I love thee in such sort
As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

11 mightst] LINTOT; mighst Q

1 **absence** suggests physical separation. Some editors link the phrase with the emotional estrangements explored in *92–6*. Certainly the start of this sonnet opens up a breathing space after the increasingly intense bitterness of the previous group. It promises a fresh start, spring after winter, presence after absence. This hope collapses as the sonnet progresses: *summer* is compressed into *autumn*, *autumn* recalls the fecundity of the *prime* (spring) only in a posthumous birth, and *winter* recurs in the penultimate word of the poem, which ends with a continuing separation.

2 **thee . . . year** you, who are the chief source of enjoyment in the transient year

4 **bareness everywhere** Cf. 5.8.

5 **time removed** time away from you; also suggesting time which has been lost

6 **teeming** full of fecundity, bountifully fertile

7 **wanton burden** *burden* often means 'offspring in the womb' in Shakespeare. Its conjunction with *wanton* suggests a superabundance which accompanies excessive sexual freedom.

9 **issue** offspring

10 **hope of orphans** The general sense 'little hope at all' is clear, but hard to explain precisely. The phrase may mean (a) the kind of hope, tinged with regret, which is born at the same time as a posthumous child; (b) the kind of hope experienced by an orphan, who could not expect to inherit an estate until his majority, by which time it might have been wasted by his guardian.

10 **unfathered fruit** continues the faint hint presented by *wanton* that to the jaded eyes of the poet the abundance of the year has hints of bastardly begetting.

11 **wait on thee** tend on you, are at your disposal like servants

12 **thou away** with you away

13 **with so . . . cheer** in such a gloomy manner. The apparent paradox of 'dull cheer' would be less apparent to a seventeenth-century reader, to whom *cheer* could mean 'countenance or mood' with no presumption that the mood would be happy.

97

How like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year?
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen?
What old December's bareness everywhere?
And yet this time removed was summer's time,
The teeming autumn big with rich increase,
Bearing the wanton burden of the prime,
Like widowed wombs after their lords' decease:
Yet this abundant issue seemed to me
But hope of orphans and unfathered fruit,
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
And thou away, the very birds are mute.
Or if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer
That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.

4 bareness] Q; Barrenness GILDON

1 **spring** draws out the absence described in *97* either forwards (to the spring which follows the *autumn* of *97*) or backwards (to the spring preceding it). The inversion of the expected seasonal order of these two poems has the effect of imaginatively extending the absence to a whole year, spring to spring, as a reader tries out possibilities.

2 **proud-pied** proudly dressed in parti-coloured clothes. (The flashes of green and blossom in an April woodland are probably meant.)
trim adornment, array

4 **That** with the result that
heavy Saturn Saturn is the god of melancholy and old age, whose association with the slower, denser elements and humours makes him *heavy* in the senses of 'weighty' and 'gloomy'. To 'laugh and leap' is a set phrase for mirthful celebration (Dent L92a.1).

5 **nor . . . nor** neither . . . nor
lays songs. This was a poeticism even by 1600.

6 **Of different . . . hue** of flowers differing in their scent and colour

7 **summer's story** Since 'A sad tale's best for winter' (*Winter's Tale* 2.1.27) a *summer's tale* would be cheery. Cf. 'summer songs', *Winter's Tale* 4.3.11.

8 **proud lap** The lap of earth on which they grow is *proud* of its offspring.

9 **lily's white** Q reads 'Lillies white'. The apostrophe (not regularly used to mark the genitive in this period) is needed in order to point the similarity with the *vermilion in the rose* of the next line.

10 **vermilion** a strong bright red. The word occurs only here in Shakespeare.

11 **but** only, merely
figures mere representations, poorly rendering their *pattern*, on which see *19*.12 n. and compare 53.

13 **you away** with you away

14 **shadow** representation or ghost, as opposed to substance. See *27*.10 n.

98

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April (dressed in all his trim)
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,
That heavy Saturn laughed and leapt with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew.
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
Yet seemed it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play.

9 lily's] Q (Lillies) 11 were] Q (weare)

The fifteen lines of this sonnet have prompted much adverse commentary. Some find in them early work which was not subsequently revised; others present the poem as a deliberately unconvinced panegyric to the friend. For the latter view, see Gerald Hammond, *The Reader and Shakespeare's Young Man Sonnets* (1984), 144–9; for a refinement, which presents the poem as one which Shakespeare could not 'have wished to bring quite round', see Kerrigan, 32–3. It is close in subject to Petrarch's *Rime Sparse* 127, Henry Constable's *Diana* 1.9, and to Campion's lyric 'There is a garden in her face'. It treats a timeworn theme. Fifteen-line 'sonnets' are found in Barnabe Barnes's *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* (1593) and Bartholomew Griffin's *Fidessa* (1596). It confirms the effect of seasonal and stylistic regression established by the previous poem: *thus did I chide* points to a past spring, and, in its metrical awkwardness, perhaps too to an earlier period of composition. The final *more flowers I noted* suggests that the poem is reluctant to fit into even fifteen lines.

1 **forward** (a) precocious (with a suggestion of presumption); (b) early

2 **'Sweet . . . smells** This line of ten monosyllables is among the least metrically refined in the Sonnets, and may indicate an early date, or that the poem was not finally revised.

3 **purple pride** In Elizabethan and Jacobean English 'purple' extended in range from red to violet. In classical literature purple is associated with imperial power; hence *pride* means more than just an object of visual pride, and suggests almost 'an emblem of glory'.

4 **for complexion** to give it (artificial) colour. 'A colouring preparation applied (by women) to "give a complexion" to the face' (*OED* 6, which cites Pliny ii, sig. A4^{v}: 'They are called at this day complexions, whereas they be clean contrary; for the complexion is natural, and these altogether artificial').

5 **grossly** (a) crudely (in a way that draws attention to its artifice); (b) impolitely (having rudely taken it from the friend); (c) violently (having spilled his blood in order to beautify yourself)

6 **for thy hand** for having stolen the whiteness from your hand

7 **marjoram** is sweet-smelling and, in its new growth (*buds*), of a golden lightness. This probably is enough to warrant the comparison with the beloved's hair.

8 **on thorns did stand** (a) were placed above thorns; (b) were on tenterhooks. 'To stand on thorns' was a proverbial expression for 'to be in a state of anxiety' (Dent T239).

10 **nor red, nor white** This probably refers to a variegated variety such as 'York and Lancaster', although it may be an elaborate periphrasis for 'pink', since that word was not available as a colour name independent of the flower until 1720. See *130*.5 n.

11 **annexed** added

12 **in pride** at the height of; suggesting also vaunting boastfulness

13 **eat** an archaic form of the past tense, pronounced 'et'

15 **But** except

99

The forward violet thus did I chide:
'Sweet thief, whence did thou steal thy sweet that smells,
If not from my love's breath? The purple pride,
Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells,
In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dyed.'
The lily I condemnèd for thy hand,
And buds of marjoram had stol'n thy hair.
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
One blushing shame, another white despair,
A third nor red, nor white, had stol'n of both,
And to his robb'ry had annexed thy breath;
But for his theft, in pride of all his growth,
A vengeful canker eat him up to death.
More flowers I noted, yet I none could see
But sweet or colour it had stol'n from thee.

2–5 'Sweet . . . dyed.'] BELL; ^~ . . . ~,^ Q 3–4 breath? The . . . dwells] GILDON; ~, ~ . . . ~? Q
9 One] SEWELL; Our Q 13 eat] Q (eate); ate BUTLER

3 **Spend'st thou** are you expending, wasting
fury frenzy of poetic inspiration. The phrase 'to spend one's fury' normally means to 'vent one's rage' (as in *2 Henry VI (Contention)* 5.1.26–7: 'And now, like Ajax Telamonius, | On sheep or oxen could I spend my fury'), which allows a secondary sense 'waste your critical anger on worthless trash', i.e. in attacking the works of rivals.

4 **Dark'ning . . . light?** sullying your talent in order to illuminate insignificant themes

5–6 **redeem . . . time** make reparation for time which has been lost. Cf. *1 Henry IV* 1.2.214: 'Redeeming time when men think least I will'. Both passages echo Ephesians 5: 15–16: 'Take heed therefore that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time: for the days are evil'.

6 **gentle numbers** noble verses
idly wastefully, as well as lazily

8 **skill and argument** ability to write and subject matter to write about

9 **resty** usually means 'restive', suggesting ungovernable restlessness; it can also mean 'Disinclined for action or exertion; sluggish, indolent, lazy; inactive' (*OED* 2a), as in Jonson's *Silent Woman* (1609), 1.1.171–2: 'He would grow resty else in his ease. His virtue would rust without action.' This latter sense is likely to be the primary one, given that the poet has spoken of *time so idly spent*.
survey, look at, assess. Q's comma (followed here) allows the following line to link either with this or l. 11. This releases the sense 'see whether Time has . . .'.

11 **be a satire to decay** vilify the actions of time as a satirist would. *Satire* is capitalized and italicized in Q, probably because it was new to the compositor (this is one of the earliest citations in *OED* for sense 4, 'satirist'). It may emphasize the frequent association in the period between satirical verses and the savage mythological wood-dwelling creatures known as satyrs. As Puttenham, 31, put it: 'and besides to make their admonitions and reproofs seem graver and of more efficacy, they made wise as if the gods of the woods, whom they called *Satyrs* or *Silvans*, should appear and recite those verses of rebuke'.

12 **spoils** 'acts of plundering' (Schmidt, 3). A secondary sense, 'make people despise things which are subject to Time's power', may be in play, anticipating the appeal to perdurable *fame* in the couplet.

14 **So** so that
prevent'st outstrip, anticipate. Q reads 'preuenst' which may represent a form of 'prevene', an obsolete term of largely Scottish provenance meaning 'To anticipate, take precautions against (a danger, evil, etc.); hence, to prevent, frustrate, evade' (*OED* s.v. 'prevene' 1a). It is more likely to be a form of 'prevent'st' which avoids a cluster of consonants.
scythe and crookèd knife Both terms probably refer to Time's sickle. *Crookèd* is introduced to connote malice (as at 60.7).

100

Where art thou, Muse, that thou forget'st so long
To speak of that which gives thee all thy might?
Spend'st thou thy fury on some worthless song,
Dark'ning thy pow'r to lend base subjects light?
Return, forgetful Muse, and straight redeem
In gentle numbers time so idly spent.
Sing to the ear that doth thy lays esteem,
And gives thy pen both skill and argument.
Rise, resty Muse, my love's sweet face survey,
If Time have any wrinkle graven there;
If any, be a satire to decay,
And make Time's spoils despisèd everywhere.
  Give my love fame faster than Time wastes life,
  So thou prevent'st his scythe and crookèd knife.

14 prevent'st] GILDON; preuenst Q; preven'st OXFORD

1 **amends** payment in compensation

2 **truth in beauty dyed** truth suffused in and permeated by beauty. Dyeing in Shakespeare is usually not used as a metaphor for deceitfully superficial colouring, since early modern England prided itself on the durability of its woad-based dyes; cf. *the dyer's hand*, III.7. The potential duplicity of the art of colouring emerges as the sonnet progresses.

3 **on my love depends** (a) (objectively) depend upon my love, the friend, for their existence; (b) (subjectively) depend upon my feeling love in order to exist. The singular ending of the verb after a plural subject is common in Shakespeare.

4 **therein dignified** you (my muse) are rendered worthy by my love

6 '**Truth . . . intermixed**' Compare the proverb 'Truth needs no colours' (excuses or rhetorical ornaments) (Dent T585). Speech-marks do not occur in Q.
colour fixed ingrained hue. *OED* does not record a usage of 'fixed' to refer to the process whereby colour is made stable in dyeing before 1790, but this sense could be anticipated here. The initial stability of the metaphor of colouring here begins to erode via a play on 'colour', meaning both 'hue' and 'Outward appearance, show, aspect, semblance of (something): generally that which serves to conceal or cloak the truth' (*OED* 11a).

7 **lay** 'To put upon a surface in layers; to put or arrange (colours, †a picture) on canvas' (*OED* 41 *Art.* a)

8 **best is . . . intermixed** The best things are really the best if they are left unadulterated.

11 **gilded tomb** develops the growing suspicion of artificial colour: cf. *Merchant* 2.7.69: 'Gilded tombs do worms infold'.

13 **office** duty
how, Q's comma after *how* is removed by many editors to create a strong enjambment. Q makes good sense: the Muse's *office* is to preserve the friend, and *I teach thee how* is a parenthesis.

14 **seem . . . shows** appear in the future as he looks now. *Seem* and *shows* together suggest appearance *rather than* substance.

101

O truant Muse, what shall be thy amends
For thy neglect of truth in beauty dyed?
Both truth and beauty on my love depends:
So dost thou too, and therein dignified.
Make answer, Muse, wilt thou not haply say
'Truth needs no colour with his colour fixed,
Beauty no pencil beauty's truth to lay,
But best is best if never intermixed'?
Because he needs no praise, wilt thou be dumb?
Excuse not silence so, for 't lies in thee
To make him much outlive a gilded tomb,
And to be praised of ages yet to be.
  Then do thy office, Muse, I teach thee how,
  To make him seem long hence, as he shows now.

6–8 'Truth . . . intermixed?'] MALONE (*italic*); ^~ . . . ~.^ Q 11 him] Q; her BENSON 14 him . . . he] Q; her . . . she BENSON

1 **strengthened** by the passage of time

2 **show** outward appearance; also 'display, parade, ostentation' (Schmidt, 2)

3 **merchandized** made into commercial merchandise. Compare the proverb 'He praises who wishes to sell' (Dent P546).

4 **publish** make public, with a play on the modern sense of 'to distribute in print'

7–8 **Philomel . . . his pipe** Philomela, sister-in-law of Tereus, who raped her and cut out her tongue, is female both when in human form and when she turns into a nightingale. Nightingales sing *in summer's front*, that is at the start of the summer. It is probably the mention of a *pipe* which makes Shakespeare change her sex: for a moment Philomel becomes a character from a pastoral, where pipers are invariably male, and often are allegorical projections of their poets. The nightingale's metamorphosis back into *her* in l. 10 occurs when the context of pious nocturnal unhappiness jogs Shakespeare into remembering her mythological past. Nocturnal hymn-singing tends to be a feminine activity in Shakespearian drama. Many editors emend *his* to *her*; a few brave souls suggest that Shakespeare may have been enough of an ornithologist to have known that only cock nightingales sing (and in Petrarch *Rime Sparse* 311, as well as in Barnabe Barnes's *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* 57.12–14, it is a male nightingale which laments). The inconsistency illustrates Shakespeare's instinctive association of certain locales with particular genders.

8 **growth of riper days** as summer advances towards the fruitfulness of autumn

10 **hush the night** The night is presented as an enraptured and pious audience moved to silence by the nightingale's *hymns*.

11 **But that** but the reason is that. It is in parallel with *Not that* and introduces the explanation of why the nightingale is quiet later in the year.

wild music (a) unrestrained song; (b) frolicsome song; (c) the song of wild birds

burdens suggests the excessive fecundity of late summer. The noun 'burden' can mean 'chorus' (*OED* 10).

12 **common** too frequent; also perhaps with a reminiscence of earlier rebukes to the friend for making himself excessively *common* in the sense 'vulgar, open to the sexual advances of everyone', as at 69.14. There also may be a residue of criticism for the rival poets who continually produce wordy panegyrics which are devalued by their frequency. The whole line has a proverbial ring to it, but no precise parallel has been found.

14 **dull** bore you, blunt your appetite for song

102

My love is strengthened though more weak in seeming;
I love not less, though less the show appear.
That love is merchandized whose rich esteeming
The owner's tongue doth publish everywhere.
Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
When I was wont to greet it with my lays,
As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
And stops his pipe in growth of riper days:
Not that the summer is less pleasant now
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,
But that wild music burdens every bough,
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
  Therefore, like her, I sometime hold my tongue,
  Because I would not dull you with my song.

8 his] Q; her *conj*. Housman in Rollins 2

1 **poverty** poetry of low value, contrasting with the *worth* of the friend

2 **scope** range. See *29*.7 n.
pride (a) the object of her pride, the friend; (b) poetic ability.

3–4 **argument all bare . . . beside** simple subject matter is of more value when it is unadorned by eloquence than it is when given what should be the additional worth that comes from being praised by me. On *argument* see *38*.3 n. Compare the proverb 'The truth shows best being naked' (Dent T589).

7 **blunt invention** lame creative powers. On *invention* see *38*.8 n.

8 **Dulling** (a) taking the edge off (picking out *blunt* from the previous line); (b) making tedious

9–10 **Were it . . . well?** Would it not be a sin to make something worse by attempting to improve it? Cf. *Lear* (Folio) 1.4.325: 'Striving to better, oft we mar what's well' and Dent W260. *Sinful* adds a particular taint to the proverbial matter of these lines: taken in conjunction with *graces* in l. 12 it implies that the poet is attempting to represent a divine benignity, which can only be contaminated by its representation in his verse.

11 **pass** end, goal

12 **graces and your gifts** refer to qualities residing in the friend ('inexpressible beauties and abilities') and to gifts which are bestowed upon the poet by the friend ('presents and bounties given to the undeserving'). This casts a retrospective light on the *poverty* of the poet and suggests that the poem is a delicately phrased supplication to a patron. *Tell* can mean 'enumerate, count'. Hence ll. 11–12 present two senses: (a) my poems are only aimed at recounting your extraordinary beauty and abilities; (b) my verses are designed to tot up your bounty to me. Sense (b) is delicately pushed to the background.

103

Alack, what poverty my Muse brings forth,
That having such a scope to show her pride
The argument all bare is of more worth
Than when it hath my added praise beside.
O, blame me not if I no more can write!
Look in your glass, and there appears a face
That overgoes my blunt invention quite,
Dulling my lines, and doing me disgrace.
Were it not sinful then, striving to mend,
To mar the subject that before was well?
For to no other pass my verses tend
Than of your graces and your gifts to tell.
And more, much more, than in my verse can sit
Your own glass shows you, when you look in it.

There may be a pause in the sequence here. The previous poem claims that the mirror reveals more than the poet can; this poem dwells on the three winters which have passed since the addressee was seen in youthful glory. A. Kent Hieatt, Charles W. Hieatt, and Anne Lake Prescott, 'When did Shakespeare Write *Sonnets* 1609?', *SP* 88 (1991), 69–109, have suggested that *104–26* show signs of later composition, since they contain a significantly higher proportion of 'late rare words' and a lower proportion of 'early rare words' than those which precede them.

1 **friend** often used of a mistress as well as a friend of the same sex, as in *Willobie His Avisa* Canto 25.19–22: 'The gravest men of former time, | That lived with fame, and happy life, | Have thought it none, or petty crime, | To love a friend besides their wife', or in *Measure* 1.4.29: 'He hath got his friend with child'.

never can be old Underlying this is a recognition that the friend *is* visibly ageing, or a faint threat that the preservation of his or her former beauty depends increasingly on the imagination of the poet: the chime in the following line on *eye I eyed* links together the poet, perception, and the identity of the friend.

3 **Such seems** The imperfect co-ordination of *as you were* and *Such seems your beauty* creates a disparity between the friend as he was, and his mere appearance of beauty now.

Three winters cold Sonneteers tended to live life in multiples of three. Horace's declaration in *Epodes* 11.5–6 ('This third December since I ceased to desire Inachia is shaking the leaves from the trees') was imitated by Desportes and Ronsard. There are signs this was not simply a convention, however: Daniel refers in the 1592 text of *Delia* (31.6) to three years of courtship, but extends it to five in 1594. Petrarch regularly punctuates the *Rime Sparse* with allusions to the amount of time which has passed since he first saw Laura's eyes.

6 **process** progression, forward movement

8 **Since . . . green** since I first saw you youthful, who are still full of vitality. *Fresh* and *green* continue the botanical imagery of the preceding lines, and suggest that the friend has the power to resist the passing of the seasons.

9–10 **Ah . . . perceived** Beauty, like the shadow cast on a sundial, shifts away from its position without any perceptible motion. Compare the proverb 'To move as the dial hand, which is not seen to move' (Dent D321). *Dial* may suggest either a sundial or a watch, on which see *77*.2 n. Since watches usually had only one hand until about 1675 any movement would be very slow. *Steal from his figure* is ambiguous: (a) Beauty creeps away from his (i.e. the friend's) form; (b) Beauty (like the hand of the clock) creeps slowly away from his (i.e. beauty's own) time of perfection; (c) Beauty robs from the perfect form of the friend with the slow imperceptible movement of a clock's hand. Sense (a) is the primary sense, but brings a shockingly abrupt change from second to first person (*you* to *his*) in the mode of address to the friend. Beauty is presented as at once a slowly vanishing quality, and as a thief in league with time, who tiptoes away with the perfection of the friend.

11 **hue** beauty, but see *20*.7 n.

stand shows no alteration, remains unmoving

12 **and** both the normal modern sense, and 'if'. This continues the uncertainty as to whether the poet can see the friend change: (a) So your beauty is actually changing, despite its appearance of stasis, and my eye *is* capable of deceiving me; (b) So your beauty is actually changing . . . if my eye is capable of deceiving me. Sense (b) emerges as the primary sense, since it is presumably *for fear of* his eye's deceiving him that the poet issues his final rebuke to posterity.

13 **unbred** *OED* cites only this passage to support the definition 'unborn'. Sense 2, 'unmannerly, ill-bred', is first cited in 1622, so may be an emergent sense here.

13–14 **thou . . . you** The shift from singular to plural marks a movement from an address to a collective *age* to the particular people who constitute it.

104

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For as you were when first your eye I eyed,
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride,
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turned
In process of the seasons have I seen,
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned,
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.
Ah yet doth beauty, like a dial hand,
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceived.
For fear of which, hear this thou age unbred:
Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

1 friend] Q; love BENSON 5 autumn] Q (*Autumne*); autumns *conj.* Capell

1 **idolatry** The conceit underlying the sonnet is that the poet has one god only, the friend, who embodies a Trinitarian unity of *Three themes in one*. Hence he is not committing *idolatry* by worshipping several idols. The apparent aim of the poem is to exclude uncertainty both of reference and of meaning—its subject is the friend and its aim is to describe his qualities with a simplicity which approaches tautology (*fair, kind, and true*). This aspiration is necessarily idolatrous, however, since its object is not God but the friend.

2 **show** appear

3 **Since** It is not clear whether this introduces the reason for an accusation of idolatry or a defence against it. Ingram and Redpath prefer the former, but the latter is more likely, since it initiates the poem's deliberate self-deception: 'How can you call me an idolater when I always sing the praises of one person' *is*, as Ingram and Redpath note, a very weak defence against the charge of idolatry if the object of worship is not God: that is the point.

4 **still such . . . so** The Gloria ('Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be') is echoed here, and through it, as Booth points out, the 1563 'Homily against Idolatry': 'images in temples and churches be indeed none other but idols, as unto which idolatry hath been, is, and ever will be committed', *Sermons or Homilies* (1833), 120.

5 **Kind . . . kind** *Epanalepsis* (the repetition of a word at either end of a clause or line) reinforces the tautology.

6 **constant** (a) the same; (b) faithful

7 **to constancy confined** restricted to representing constancy; limited to fidelity. The *polyptoton* (repetition of *constant* in a different form) loops back to the previous line.

8 **leaves out difference** (a) excludes other subjects; (b) omits mention of differences between the lovers

9 '**Fair**, **kind**, **and true**' These apparently simple terms cover a range of senses: beautiful, just, equitable; friendly, generous, gentle; truthful, faithful, unchanging. Vendler detects here a secular Platonic alternative to the Trinity, which draws on the Platonic triad of the Beautiful, the Good, and the True. However, Nicholas Breton's *Melancholic Humours* (1600) includes a similar list of united virtues, 'Sweet, fair, wise, kind, blessed, true | Blessed be all these in you', which suggests a sonneteer's convention.

11 **invention** ability to write, or to find out words to suit his subject
spent (a) exhausted; (b) deployed

12 **Three themes in one** (a) three subjects in one; (b) three virtues combined into one superior virtue; (c) three virtues combined in one man
scope range of subject matter. See *29*.7 and n.

13 Compare the proverb 'Beauty and chastity seldom meet' (Dent B163).

14 **kept seat** resided

105

Let not my love be called idolatry,
Nor my belovèd as an idol show,
Since all alike my songs and praises be
To one, of one, still such, and ever so.
Kind is my love today, tomorrow kind,
Still constant in a wondrous excellence;
Therefore my verse, to constancy confined,
One thing expressing, leaves out difference.
'Fair, kind, and true' is all my argument,
'Fair, kind, and true' varying to other words;
And in this change is my invention spent,
Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords.
Fair, kind, and true have often lived alone,
Which three till now never kept seat in one.

9, 10 'Fair, kind, and true'] GLOBE; ^~, ~, ~ ~ ^ Q

The text is found in two MSS dating from the 1630s: Pierpont Morgan MA 1057, p. 96, and Rosenbach MS 1083/16, p. 256, which are printed as separate and possibly authorial variants in Kerrigan and Oxford. There are no clear Shakespearian analogues for the scribal variants, however: 'all-wasting' is not otherwise used by Shakespeare, and removes the pun on 'waste' which is also found in *12.10*. 'Annals' is found elsewhere only in the Roman setting of *Coriolanus* 5.6.114, and suggests a Jacobean sophistication: 'Chronicles' were passé by 1620, and the fashion for Tacitus, the author of 'Annals', was well entrenched. The substitution of 'face' for *hand* in l. 6, combined with the fussy 'or' to round off the list, suggests a memorial reconstruction of the unorthodox blazon in Q (which zooms in from extremities to the ornaments of the face). The other minor variants suggest poor recollection of the Q text rather than an early version, with the exception of the intelligent emendation to Q of 'skill' in l. 12.

1 **chronicle of wasted time** record of past time misspent. *Wasted time* could conceivably be a semipersonification, meaning 'attenuated, skinny Time'.

2 **fairest wights** most beautiful people. Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590–1609), in which knights and heroes purporting to derive from British prehistory are praised in a consciously archaic style (and in which *wights* is a frequent term), prompted a number of sonneteers to declare the superiority of their mistresses to ancient beauties, as in Daniel's *Delia* (1592), 46. The posthumous printing of the final instalment of Spenser's poem in 1609, the year of Thorpe's Quarto, would have given the reference to Spenser's *antique pen* added topicality.

5 **blazon** a formal catalogue of the elements of a lady's beauty, as in a heraldic description, which became one of the standard elements in sonnet sequences in the 1590s.

7 **would have** wished to. (The poet turns past prophets into writers who are attempting to write descriptions of the friend. Being deprived of his actual presence, they fall short of representing his *worth*.)

8 **master** 'To have at one's disposal; to own, possess' (*OED* 6). The earliest cited examples of the transitive verb are from Shakespeare, e.g. *Lucrece* l. 863.

9 **praises are but prophecies** 'their praises of past beauties in fact were predictions of your beauties'. Compare the Todd MS of Henry Constable's *Diana* (date uncertain; Constable died in 1613): 'I never will deny | That former poets praise the beauty of their days; | But all those beauties were but figures of thy praise, | And all those poets did of thee but prophesy'.

10 **prefiguring** In biblical exegesis, Old Testament events were supposed to 'prefigure' their true archetypes in the New Testament. In conjunction with *divining* this makes a quasi-theological claim that the friend is the type of all that is beautiful. This connects it thematically with *105*.

11 **for . . . eyes** since they looked only with the eyes of prediction (rather than seeing you in reality)

12 **skill** Random Clod (Randall McLeod), 'Information upon Information', *Text* 5 (1991), 253–8, defends Q's 'still' on the grounds that it is an unlikely compositorial error for 'skill', given that 'st' is a ligature and 'sk' is not. The MSS support 'skill', which is very likely to have been misread by the compositor. Q's reading could be glossed 'And because they only saw you with the eyes of divination, rather than actually seeing you, they still lacked enough (words or ability, supplied) to describe your worth'. The MS reads more easily, which may be a reason to suspect it: Q's reluctance to state even what these past writers lacked could be seen as an expressive hiatus.

14 **wonder** look on with amazement

106

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead, and lovely knights;
Then in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have expressed
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring,
And, for they looked but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
    For we, which now behold these present days,
    Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

1 chronicle of wasted] Q; annals of all-wasting RO 1; Annalls of all wastinge M 2 descriptions] Q, RO 1; discription M 3 rhyme] Q, RO 1; mine M 6 Of hand, of foot] Q; Of face, of hand RO 1; Of face of hands M of eye] Q, M; or eye RO 1 of brow] Q; or brow RO 1, M 8 Even] Q, RO 1; Eu'n M 9 their] Q, M, RO 1 *mistakenly transcribed as 'these' in* OXFORD are] Q; were RO 1, M 10 this] Q; these RO 1; those M time] Q; days RO 1, M 11 looked] Q; saw M; say RO 1 divining] Q, M; deceiving RO 1 12 skill] RO 1, M; still Q; style *conj.* Tucker your] Q; thy RO 1, M 13 we] Q, M; me RO 1 present] Q, M; pleasant RO 1 14 tongues] Q, M; tongue RO 1

The date of this poem has been much discussed. The *mortal moon* has been seen as an allusion to the Spanish Armada (which was drawn up in a crescent), defeated in 1588 (Hotson); to the eclipse which passed without incident in 1595; to the 'grand climacteric' (63rd year, thought to be particularly perilous) of Queen Elizabeth I, who was regularly associated with Cynthia the goddess of chastity and the moon (1595–6); a serious illness which the Queen was rumoured to have had in 1599–1600; the death of the Queen and the accession of James I in 1603 (although his coronation was delayed until March 1604 as a result of plague). The last is the most likely: *sad augurs* alludes to the many who predicted national catastrophe after the death of the childless Queen, and *olives of endless age* alludes to the frequent efforts of James I and his panegyrists to present his reign as an age of imperial peace. The Jacobean ambience of the poem is reinforced by its position immediately after *106*, Shakespeare's most direct allusion to Spenser, whose Elizabethan epic is presented as a thing of the past, and by its echoes of *Antony* (1609), on which see J. M. Nosworthy, 'All Too Short a Date: Internal Evidence in Shakespeare's Sonnets', *Essays in Criticism* 2 (1952), 311–24. For a summary of all the proposed dates (which range from 1579 to 1609) see Rollins 2, i.263–8. A manuscript version from *c.* 1660 entitled 'A Monument' survives in Folger MS V.a.148, Pt. 1, fo. 22.

1 **prophetic soul** intuitions about the future, as in Hamlet's 'O my prophetic soul', 1.5.41. Cf. Dent S666.2.

2 **dreaming on** having fantastical imaginings about

3 **control** The context suggests 'achieve sufficient authority over (the lease) in order to emend it'; *OED* offers only 'To challenge, find fault with, censure, reprehend, object to (a thing)' (3b) and 'to hold sway over, exercise power or authority over' (4). It also gives a specifically Shakespearian usage, 'To overpower, overmaster' (5), as in *Lucrece* l. 678.

4 **Supposed** 'considered to be', with also possibly a technical legal usage of 'suppose', 'To state, allege: esp. formally in an indictment' (*OED* 11); i.e. the poet's limited *lease* of *true love* is formally recognized to terminate at a particular time

4 **confined doom** (a) expiry at a particular time; (b) judgement that will bring with it confinement, or imprisonment. *Confined* is stressed on the first syllable. It can also mean 'stated with precision', as in *2 Henry IV* 4.1.173, although some editions choose to read 'consigned' in that place (Schmidt).

5 **The mortal . . . endured** See headnote. The reference is probably to the death of Elizabeth I on 24 March 1603. If the poem dates from 1603/4 *endured* must mean 'has suffered, undergone' (a sense implicit in Edgar's 'Men must endure | Their going hence even as their coming hither', *Lear* (Folio) 5.2.9–10); if it refers to a period of illness from which the Queen recovered it means 'passed through alive'.

6 **sad augurs . . . presage** disappointed prophets of doom now confute their own predictions. Cf. *Venus* l. 457.

7 **Incertainties . . . assured** things which appeared uncertain now adopt a regal posture of certainty. There may be an allusion here to the unexpectedly peaceful accession of James I.

8 **olives of endless age** olive branches, symbolizing peace, which will last for ever

9 **drops . . . balmy time** Drops of balm were used in the coronation ceremony. *Balmy* also means 'Deliciously soft and soothing' (*OED* 4 *fig.*).

10 **My love looks fresh** If *My love* is taken to mean 'the person I love' and if this is identified with the friend, and if the friend is the Earl of Southampton, then this could allude to the release of the Earl from the Tower on 10 April 1603, a *confined doom* indeed, or perhaps to his full reinstatement to his title by Parliament on 18 April 1604. A similar chain of hypotheses could equally frailly be tacked to the supposition that it alludes to the release of the Earl of Pembroke from the Fleet prison in March or April 1601. If any link in these chains of supposition were to be found less than rigid then either hypothesis would fall—if indeed they had ever tottered to their feet.

subscribes 'submits, yields' (*OED* 8), with a stronger suggestion of reversing the legal effects of the limited lease referred to in l. 3, via *OED* 8b: 'To submit or subject oneself *to* law or rule'. The etymological association of 'subscribe' with writing one's name *beneath* (*sub-scribere*) is alive in this poem in which a poet seeks to assert the power of his writing over death.

107

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come,
Can yet the lease of my true love control,
Supposed as forfeit to a confined doom.
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured,
And the sad augurs mock their own presage.
Incertainties now crown themselves assured,
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
Now with the drops of this most balmy time
My love looks fresh, and death to me subscribes,
Since, spite of him, I'll live in this poor rhyme,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes.
And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

11 **spite** in spite
12 **insults** enjoys arrogant supremacy
dull and speechless tribes peoples who cannot write verse, and who cannot therefore conquer death. Louis Le Roy, *Of the Interchangeable Course or Variety of Things*, trans. R[obert] A[shley] (1594), 22^{v}, writes that 'The Nomads of great Tartaria, and some savages of the new-found lands do use no letters at all'.
13 **in this** in this poem
monument See *81*.9 and n.
14 **crests** (a) crested helmets (used to frighten an enemy, as by the tyrannical sultan in Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* 9.25); (b) heraldic devices
spent wasted to nothing

1–2 **What's . . . spirit?** 'What mental resource is there which can be set down in writing which I have not used to represent to you my loyal inner nature?' *True spirit* means both 'loyal nature' and 'my spirit as it actually is'.

3 **new . . . now** Malone's emendation of the 'now' to 'new' shows his love of symmetry rather than Shakespeare's. 'What is there now to add to the list' is perfectly intelligible.

4 **dear merit** loved worth, or expensive desert

5 **sweet boy** the only time this phrase is used in the Sonnets. It is used in Shakespeare by fathers to their sons, and makes great claims to intimacy. The last exchange between Falstaff and Henry V (as Hal has become) runs: 'God save thee, my sweet Boy. *King*: My Lord Chief Justice, speak to that vain man. *Chief Justice*: Have you your wits? Know you what 'tis you speak?', *2 Henry IV* 5.3.43–5. It can carry homosexual overtones, as when Richard Barnfield, *Cynthia* 14.5, calls his Ganymede-like male lover 'sweet boy'. Cf. *Venus* l. 155. These associations may have prompted Benson to one of his bowdlerizations, 'sweet-love'.

7 **no old thing old** seeing even amorous clichés as fresh
thou . . . thine a representatively predictable prayer of those in love, venerably echoing the Song of Solomon 2: 16: 'My beloved is mine, and I am his'.

8 **hallowed** alludes to the Lord's Prayer, 'Our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name', Matthew 6: 9.

9 **fresh case** (a) new circumstances; (b) bright new clothes; (c) new argument

10 **Weighs not** See *51*.10 n.

11 **Nor . . . place** does not yield priority to wrinkles, which necessarily come with age. To *give place* is to defer to someone's higher status in, for example, seating at table or in a formal procession.

12 **antiquity for aye his page** age (or 'the writings of the ancients') his inferior servant (or 'the page which he reads') for ever (picking up on *give place*) above. The pun on page the young servant and page of paper was popularized by 'The Induction' to Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveller* in which Jack Wilton boasts that 'a proper fellow-page of yours . . . hath bequeathed for waste paper here amongst you certain pages of his misfortunes', Nashe, ii. 207.

13–4 **Finding . . . dead** The first principle of love is alive and well in the pages of antiquity, despite their aged appearance. *There bred* suggests that love is born anew with each reiteration of an old commonplace prayer.

108

What's in the brain that ink may character,
Which hath not figured to thee my true spirit?
What's new to speak, what now to register,
That may express my love, or thy dear merit?
Nothing, sweet boy; but yet, like prayers divine,
I must each day say o'er the very same,
Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,
Even as when first I hallowed thy fair name.
So that eternal love in love's fresh case
Weighs not the dust and injury of age,
Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place,
But makes antiquity for aye his page,
  Finding the first conceit of love there bred,
  Where time and outward form would show it dead.

3 now] Q; new MALONE 5 sweet boy] Q; sweet-love BENSON

2 **my . . . qualify** moderate, diminish my ardour

3 **easy** easily
from myself depart 'abandon my true self' (Ingram and Redpath); or, with extreme literalness, 'step out of my own skin'. Compare the proverb 'The lover is not where he lives but where he loves' (Dent L565).

4 **my soul . . . lie** For the commonplace of lovers exchanging hearts or souls, see *22*.5–7.

6 **him that** one that

7 **Just to . . . exchanged** exactly at the appointed moment, unchanged by the passage of time. *Time* is a slippery word here, meaning both a transitory 'moment', and 'period of absence', with overtones too of 'this age'. Hence *not with the time exchanged* suggests also 'I have not taken on the fickleness of this age'.

8 **So that . . . stain** in order that I might bring water (repentant tears) to wash away the moral stain of my absence. Lady Macbeth's 'a little water clears us of this deed' is a dark analogue of this passage, *Macbeth* 2.2.65. The claim is indeed suspiciously pat, especially from one who has claimed that 'Th' offender's sorrow lends but weak relief | To him that bears the strong offence's cross' (*34*.11–12).

9–10 **nature . . . blood** Underlying this image is a scene often enacted in morality plays such as *The Castle of Perseverance* in which the vices lay siege to the body. *Frailty* can connote sexual infidelity. *Blood* is a frequent metonym for passionate bodily nature.

11 **preposterously** absurdly; putting that which should come last (*nothing*) ahead of that which should come first (*all thy sum of good*). *Stained* means 'contaminated, blotted by dishonour'.

13 **For nothing . . . call** I regard the whole universe as worthless

14 **Save . . . all** except for you, my rose, who are to me all the universe, despite being only one element in it. Cf. *1*.2.

109

O, never say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seemed my flame to qualify.
As easy might I from myself depart,
As from my soul which in thy breast doth lie:
That is my home of love; if I have ranged,
Like him that travels I return again,
Just to the time, not with the time exchanged,
So that myself bring water for my stain.
Never believe, though in my nature reigned
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stained,
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good:
  For nothing this wide universe I call,
  Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all.

14 rose] Q (Rose)

2 **motley** fool. *OED* cites this as the first usage of the noun in this sense. It also connotes incoherence, since the *motley* worn by a fool is parti-coloured. 'Folly' could be used to mean 'wantonness or promiscuity' (Partridge, 108), as in Othello's 'She turned to folly, and she was a whore' (5.2.141). Some editors detect an allusion to Shakespeare's activities as a player. This is at best a distant reference, since the role of fool was a specialized one which Shakespeare did not play.

3 **Gored** (a) furnished with 'gores' or triangular pieces of cloth (continuing from *motley*); (b) wounded; (c) a 'gore sinister' was a heraldic mark assigned to those who fled from their enemies. Although *OED* does not record a verbal form derived from this sense of the noun, the tincture of disgrace provided by this association is appropriate here.

4 **Made . . . new** repeated old infidelities as the result of new passions. *Affections* could mean 'objects of loving attachment' or 'Feeling as opposed to reason; passion, lust' (*OED* 3). *Old offences* might suggest buggery, which was referred to in the period euphemistically as 'old-fashioned love'. Cf. Donne's Satire 2.7.

5 **truth** constancy in love

6 **Askance and strangely** with haughty disregard. *Askance* can also mean 'sidelong', 'out of the corner of one's eye'.

7 **blenches** (a) swervings aside from what is right; (b) sidelong glances. *OED* cites no other examples for this sense. The more usual meaning is 'trick or stratagem'.
gave my . . . youth rejuvenated my affections (Booth's suggested sense 'won me the affections of another friend' is strained but not impossible)

8 **And worse . . . love** and experiments with less satisfactory loves have proved you to be my best love, or the best object of my love

9 **Now all is done** now all that is over
have no end receive from me something which will endure for ever

10 **appetite . . . grind** The metaphor is from the sharpening of knives, which like an appetite need to be whetted against a new object. For the suggestion of sexual misconduct here compare 95.14.

11 **try** both 'to test out the worth and strength of' and 'to subject to trial', with a suggestion of deliberately imposing hardship

13 **heaven** is monosyllabic.

110

Alas 'tis true, I have gone here and there,
And made myself a motley to the view,
Gored my own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,
Made old offences of affections new.
Most true it is that I have looked on truth
Askance and strangely; but, by all above,
Those blenches gave my heart another youth,
And worse essays proved thee my best of love.
Now all is done, have what shall have no end.
Mine appetite I never more will grind
On newer proof, to try an older friend,
A god in love, to whom I am confined.
Then give me welcome, next my heaven the best,
Even to thy pure and most most loving breast.

6 Askance] Q (Asconce)

1 **with Fortune chide** blame Fortune (and not me). Randall McLeod, 'Unemending Shakespeare's Sonnet 111', *SEL* 21 (1981), 75–96 argues in favour of Q's 'wish'. Since 'sh' is a ligature (single piece of type) he claims it is unlikely that compositor B made a mechanical error in substituting it for the 't' in his copy-text. He claims too that Q is intelligible unemended. 'O for my sake do you wish Fortune chide' could be read as a bitterly masochistic command: 'Now that I am down ask fortune to chide me further, and do it for me', a command pointedly at odds with the poet's later urging to 'wish I were renewed'. Against this reading, however, is (a) the possibility that the compositor misread the whole word of his copy as 'wish' and so used a 'sh' ligature (as may occur at *106*.12). (b) It creates a suggestion that 'The guilty goddess' is the object of Fortune's chiding rather than a description of Fortune herself. One does not need to be a vigorous wielder of Occam's razor to feel that goddesses should not be unduly multiplied, especially if the changing of a letter could make them vanish. (c) Q's reading leads to an extremely harsh transition between the ironical self-subjection of the beginning ('goad Fortune on') and the appeal for pity in l. 8 ('Pity me then'). Pity is often associated in the Sonnets with abjection, however, and such violent shifts of mood do occur, although rarely before the *volta* (i.e. as here before l. 9). It is wise always to be suspicious of eighteenth-century rationalizations of Q (although Gildon 1710, the first edition to read 'with', is scarcely vigorous in his emendations of Benson's text). In this instance, however, the rationalization makes appreciably better sense than the original. McLeod's claim that Benson was satisfied with 'wish' is not quite right: Benson emends 'harmfull' to 'harmless' in l. 2 in order to thrash some kind of sense out of a text which he clearly found obscure.

2 **guilty goddess** goddess who is guilty of (rather than me)

4 **public means . . . public manners** These phrases mark an opposition between the methods which the poet/playwright has to use to earn a living and those of a leisured aristocrat (cf. *110*.2). Although many players were wealthy, they were frequently associated with low social orders. A statute of 1572, directed against 'Rogue, vagabonds and sturdy beggars', required members of theatrical companies to become the retainers of noblemen, and linked the theatre with vagrants, tinkers, and bearwards.

5 **brand** indelible mark of shame. The practice of branding criminals continued in England until 1829. People claiming Benefit of Clergy and found guilty of murder were branded on the thumb with an 'M'. Under the Statute of Vagabonds 1547 men and women who would not work were to be branded on the breast with a 'V' and adjudged a slave for two years. Those who were guilty of perjury were placed in the pillory and then branded on the forehead with a 'P'. Compare *112*.1–2. There may alternatively be an allusion to the shame attached to the career of playwright in this period: Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomy of Abuses* (1583), sig. L6^{v}: 'they carrying the note or brand of God upon their backs, which way soever they may go, are to be hissed out of Christian Kingdoms'.

6–7 **subdued** | **To** brought to subjection (either physical or spiritual) by

7 **dyer's hand** English dyes of this period were woad-based, and produced an indelible stain in those regularly exposed to them. Shakespeare's father was a glover, so he may have had practical experience of this.

8 **renewed** restored. Often 'made spiritually regenerate' (*OED* 2b), as in the Collect for Christmas Day in the 1548 Book of Common Prayer: 'Grant that we . . . may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit'.

10 **Potions of eisel** medicinal drinks based on vinegar; bitter cures. Vinegar was a frequent ingredient in recommended cures for the plague, which struck London severely in 1592–4 and in 1603, both periods which have been associated with the composition or revision of the Sonnets. 'Eat sorrel steeped in vinegar, in the morning fasting', W. P. Barrett, ed., *Present Remedies against the Plague* (1933), sig. A4^{v}.

infection fuses the medical imagery with that of *the dyer's hand*, since its Latin root *inficere* means literally 'to dip into, to stain' (Geoffrey Hill, *The Lords of Limit* (1984), 153).

11 **No bitterness** there is no bitterness

12 **Nor double . . . correction** nor a double act of penitential atonement designed to correct what has already been corrected

14 **Even that your pity** The line retains some of the bitterness of the other cures proposed: *that* may introduce the following

III

O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
Than public means which public manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.
Pity me then, and wish I were renewed,
Whilst, like a willing patient, I will drink
Potions of eisel 'gainst my strong infection.
No bitterness that I will bitter think,
Nor double penance to correct correction.
Pity me then, dear friend, and, I assure ye,
Even that your pity is enough to cure me.

1 with] GILDON; wish Q 2 harmful] Q; harmless BENSON 12 to] Q; too *conj*. Kenyon in Rollins 2

clause ('I assure you that . . .') or may be a demonstrative pronoun clinging disparagingly to *your pity*. The latter reading gives it a scorn approaching the Latin *iste*: so 'even that undesirable thing your pity is enough to cure me'.

1 **th' impression** Scandal (or perhaps the *brand* referred to in *111*.5) leaves a declivity which the friend's pity fills.

2 **vulgar scandal** (a) public disgrace; (b) base slander

3 **calls me . . . ill** represents me as good or bad

4 **So** provided that

o'er-green gloss over, render fresh. A coinage. Seymour-Smith suggests 'cover over so as to hide—as a gardener re-turfs an unsightly patch of earth, or as old buildings are covered by ivy', which seems unduly literal: *green* is used to mean 'fresh' or 'young' with no reference to colour in *63*.14 and *104*.8. Polonius's 'You speak like a green girl', *Hamlet* 1.3.101, suggests a possible sense 'attribute to mere youthfulness'.

allow 'concede merit to'. The primary sense of *allow* is 'praise', but it is often used in contexts which suggest reluctant praise or a partial concession.

7–8 **None . . . wrong** 'There is no one else who means enough to me, nor do I mean enough to anyone alive, either to alter my obdurate senses, or to change right and wrong.' The lines are among the most obscure in the sequence, partly because the poet takes it as read that the friend will understand *None else* to imply 'no one else is so dear to me or means so much to me'. In l. 8 *or* implies an 'either' before *steeled*, and *changes* has as its objects both *steeled sense* and *right and wrong*. The relationship between these two phrases is particularly hard to determine, since it is unclear whether the friend has power to change what is objectively right and wrong, or simply to change the poet's subjective and obdurate sense of what is and is not right. Pooler suggests 'none but you can alter my fixed opinions, whether they are right or wrong'. Although many emendations have been proposed, Q's uncertainty is expressive: for the poet what is really right and wrong and what he thinks of as being right and wrong have become identified, and the only person of any import in changing his views is the friend.

9 **profound abysm** deep abyss

10 **adder's sense** Adders are proverbially deaf (Dent A32), and were thought to be able to close their ears, as in Psalm 58: 4–5: 'Their poison is even like the poison of a serpent: like the deaf adder *that* stoppeth his ear'.

12 **Mark . . . dispense** (a) notice how I justify my neglect of others' opinion; (b) notice how I gloss over my previous neglect of you; (c) notice how I pass over your former neglect of me. Sense (a) is the primary sense: the other two surface with a painful reminder of earlier stages of the sequence.

13–14 **You are . . . dead** Q's reading here can be glossed: 'You are so powerfully a part of my mental and moral powers that it is to me alone of all the world that you are truly alive'. This almost solipsistic reading of the couplet is contentious, though warranted by a poem in which the poet has sunk himself into a *profound abysm* of neglect of others' opinions. Line 14 is often emended, after Malone, to 'That all the world besides, methinks, they're dead', on the grounds that 'y' is a compositorial misreading of þ (th), used as an abbreviated form of 'they'. This diminishes the solipsism of the poem into an adolescent petulance in its final 'they're dead'. It also weakens the force of *bred* in l. 13: 'you are generated solely by my imagination'. This prepares for the hyperbole of the final line in Q, which in turn prepares for the blindness claimed by the poet at the start of the next sonnet.

112

Your love and pity doth th' impression fill
Which vulgar scandal stamped upon my brow,
For what care I who calls me well or ill,
So you o'er-green my bad, my good allow?
You are my all the world, and I must strive
To know my shames and praises from your tongue.
None else to me, nor I to none alive,
That my steeled sense or changes right or wrong.
In so profound abysm I throw all care
Of others' voices, that my adder's sense
To critic and to flatterer stoppèd are:
Mark how with my neglect I do dispense.
  You are so strongly in my purpose bred
  That all the world besides me thinks y' are dead.

8 or changes] Q; e'er changes *conj*. Malone; o'erchanges *conj*. Tucker 9 abysm] Q (*Abisme*); abyss OXFORD 14 besides me thinks y' are dead] Q; besides, me thinks, are dead *conj.* Capell; besides methinks they are dead MALONE 1790; besides methinks th'are dead G. B. EVANS

1 **mine eye . . . mind** I am so preoccupied with you that I see only with my mind's eye, and my outward vision is entirely suppressed. Compare Pliny, i.334–5: 'It cannot be denied that with the soul we imagine, with the mind we see, and the eyes as vessels and instruments receiving from it that visual power and faculty, send it soon after abroad. Hereupon it cometh that a deep and intentive cogitation blindeth a man so that he seeth not, namely when the sight is retired inward.' The sonnet inverts the common belief that objects were required to bring absent loved ones to mind, as in Thomas Wright's *Passions of the Mind in General*, ed. W. W. Newbold, The Renaissance Imagination 15 (New York and London, 1986), 200: 'for although true friends have always a secret cabinet in their memories to talk in their minds with them whom they love although absent, yet except the memory be revived by some external object oblivion entereth'.

2 **that which . . . about** the eye which shows me where to go

3 **part his function** give up, or decide to share, his office

4 **effectually is out** in effect is blinded

5 **delivers to the heart** In Renaissance psychology sensitive apprehension, such as sight, was received in the brain. Here the heart, which Wright, *Passions of the Mind*, 114, presents as the physical centre for apprehending passions, usurps the function of the mind.

6 **latch** grasp (the word can be used of the power of the senses or mind to apprehend an impression). Q's 'lack' (which does not rhyme) is likely to be a misreading of this unusual word, used by Shakespeare only in *Macbeth* 4.3.194–6: 'I have words | That would be howled out in the desert air | Where hearing should not latch them'.

7 **quick objects . . . part** the mind has no power to control or retain the rapidly varying objects which pass before the eye. *His* is used interchangeably with *its* to refer to the eye. The change of pronoun here, however, prompts a reading in which *his* might momentarily be taken to agree with *mind*, which would imply that the mind has madly lost control over its own *objects*, or 'purposes'.

8 **holds . . . catch** retains images at which it glances

10 **sweet-favour** Q's hyphen probably indicates a compound adjective with 'ed' understood from *deformèd*: so 'sweet favoured' or attractively shaped. Without the hyphen it would mean 'beautiful appearance' (Schmidt, 7). Delius conjectured 'sweet-favoured'. To harden the phrase completely into a compound adjective, however, loses the momentary effect of an antithesis between the beautiful abstraction 'favour' on the one hand and the brutal physicality of 'creature' on the other.

13 **Incapable** 'Unable to take in, receive, contain, hold, or keep' (the first citation for *OED* 1). The eye is so occupied with the friend that it can take in no other image.
replete full (as with food)

14 **My . . . untrue** My mind is so loyally obsessed with you that it makes my eye incapable of seeing accurately what is before it. Q reads 'maketh mine untrue', which could be glossed 'creates my lack of truth' were it not that 'untrue' is not elsewhere used by Shakespeare to mean 'untruth'. The next sonnet turns to the deficiencies of the *mind*, confirming the impression that the couplet of this sonnet should concern those of the *eye*.

113

Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind,
And that which governs me to go about
Doth part his function, and is partly blind,
Seems seeing, but effectually is out:
For it no form delivers to the heart
Of bird, of flower, or shape which it doth latch.
Of his quick objects hath the mind no part,
Nor his own vision holds what it doth catch:
For if it see the rud'st or gentlest sight,
The most sweet-favour or deformèd'st creature,
The mountain, or the sea, the day, or night,
The crow, or dove, it shapes them to your feature.
Incapable of more, replete with you,
My most true mind thus makes mine eye untrue.

6 bird, of] Q; birds, or BENSON latch] MALONE 1790 (*conj.* Capell); lack Q 8 catch] Q; take GILDON 1714 10 sweet-favour] Q; sweet-favoured *conj.* Delius 13 more, replete] GILDON; ~ ^ ~, Q 14 makes mine eye untrue] MALONE (*conj.* Capell); maketh mine untrue Q; mak'th mine eye untrue *conj.* Lettsom in Dyce 1866

1–3 **Or whether . . . or whether** 'does . . . or . . .?' *Shall I say* governs both alternatives: so 'Shall I say that my mind, elevated to kingship by its love for you, drinks in deadly flattery like a king? Or shall I say that my eye is correct in seeing as it does, and in turning monsters and shapeless things into angels like you, taught this magic of transformation by your love?'

4 **alchemy** the art of turning base metals to gold, here loosely 'magic of transformation'. Used elsewhere to suggest superficial transformation, as at *33*.4, where it is also associated with flattery.

5 **indigest** 'shapeless, confused; unarranged. (Often with reference to Ovid's *Quem dixere chaos, rudis indigestaque moles*, Met. i.7.)' (OED 1), as in *K. John* 5.7.25–7: 'you are born | To set a form upon that indigest, | Which he hath left so shapeless and so rude'.

6 **Such . . . resemble** The praise is put in such a way as to render both sides of the comparison unstable: the monsters are turned to cherubim which resemble the friend, but there is no guarantee that he is not also a monster transformed into an angelic form (which he only *resembles* outwardly) by the alchemical magic of the eye.

7 **Creating** The regal context established in l. 2 suggests *OED* 3: 'to create a peer'. The eye is presented as a monarch who dubs all things good that *assemble* around him. In 1603 James I created 906 knights.

8 **As fast . . . assemble** as rapidly as objects gather round (a) the beams which the eye was believed to emit; (b) the rays which were supposed to emanate from majesty

9 **'tis the first** i.e. the first option set out in ll. 1–4, that the mind is flattered. Via the use of *creating* in l. 7 the sonnet had already been drifting towards this alternative.
in my seeing which inheres in how I see; also perhaps 'as I see the case'

11 **what . . . 'greeing** what is to the mind's taste. The apostrophe before *greeing* is not in Q and not strictly necessary, since *gree* is a recognized aphetic form of *agree*.

12 **to his . . . cup** and laces the brew to suit the mind's palate

13–14 **If . . . begin** The eye is presented here as both cook and chief taster, preparing the view of the world to suit the mind's preferences. So if the cup (the misrepresentation of the world in the shape of the friend) turns out to be poisoned, the eye commits a *lesser sin* than it might otherwise do because it lovingly tastes the cup first. It therefore dies (committing suicide) before it has a chance to perform the greater sin of regicide.

114

Or whether doth my mind, being crowned with you,
Drink up the monarch's plague this flattery,
Or whether shall I say mine eye saith true,
And that your love taught it this alchemy?
To make of monsters, and things indigest,
Such cherubins as your sweet self resemble,
Creating every bad a perfect best
As fast as objects to his beams assemble?
O, 'tis the first, 'tis flatt'ry in my seeing,
And my great mind most kingly drinks it up.
Mine eye well knows what with his gust is 'greeing,
And to his palate doth prepare the cup.
If it be poisoned, 'tis the lesser sin,
That mine eye loves it and doth first begin.

11 'greeing] Q (greeing)

1–14 The sense of this very difficult sonnet is: 'I lied when in the past I said I could not love you more completely: I said that because I did not then understand that things could grow as well as decline. Given that I was so afraid of time in those former days why should I not say "Now I love you best"? I was trying to celebrate the momentary triumph of love over time and to regard the present moment as the best and crowning moment of love, and to forget about the rest of time's destructive activity. But now I know that love is a baby which continues to grow, therefore I should not say "Now I love you best".'

2 **Even those** those very ones

4 **clearer** '*clear fire*, a fire in full combustion without flame or smoke' (*OED* 1a)

5–9 Modern editions follow Q's 'divert' in l. 8. This makes the second quatrain ungrammatical and disconnected from the argument of the poem, a fact frequently noted and deplored. Capell's emendation of Q's 'divert' to *diverts* solves this problem: it makes *diverts* the main verb of the quatrain, with *reckoning time* as its subject, rather than leaving it as a further verb agreeing with the (plural) *millioned accidents* of time. It is likely that the compositor was beguiled into repeating the plural forms which have preceded this verb, and missing the final 's' before *strong*. The whole quatrain then becomes a grammatically complete explanation of how the poet came to see that his love would change to become stronger: he is one of the *strong minds* which are diverted to accommodate the changeability of time, and he comes to appreciate that *the course of altering things* can include growth as well as decay. The second quatrain works in two ways, both as a description of all the things which in the past made him desperately try to claim his love was perfect and therefore outside time's power, *and* as an account of how the poet has come to change his mind about his love.

5 **reckoning time** 'time who brings all to their reckoning'. If Q's 'Divert' is followed in l. 8, as in the majority of modern editions, *reckoning* functions first confidently as a participle agreeing with *I*, with 'time' as its object: 'considering, or counting up time, like an authoritative assessor'; then as a participular adjective agreeing with time. Then, with the apparent absence of a main verb for 'time' by l. 9, and with the participle *fearing* which agrees with *I*, the first interpretation returns. The constantly shifting efforts of a reader to hold Q's syntax in check could be argued to imitate the continuing processes of change which are the poem's theme. They are much more likely to result from a misprint in l. 8 of Q. See note to ll. 5–9.

5 **millioned** numbered by the million; possibly a dialect form of 'million'. First cited usage in *OED*.
accidents literally 'things which fall', hence chance events which drop between vows and their fulfilment

7 **Tan** make weather-beaten and suntanned, and hence unattractive
sharp'st intents the most eager intentions

8 **Diverts . . . things** makes even confident minds consider the mutability of things, diverting their strength (like a river) into a new *course*. This functions in two ways: it describes how the poet in the past began to think about change and so to insist on the full perfection of his love; (secondarily) it made him begin to realize that things grow as well as decline. See note on ll. 5–9 above.

11 **certain o'er incertainty** 'attempting to establish one point of certainty in a world of universal uncertainty'. Q's 'certaine ore in-certainty' suggests also 'excessively certain in my certainty'.

12 **Crowning . . . rest** making my present certainty a king, whilst the past and future were matters of uncertain fear. The symmetry of the present participles *crowning* and *doubting* unites certainty and fear as the previous line had paradoxically combined certainty and uncertainty.

13–14 **Love . . . grow** But Love, like Cupid, is a baby which was growing in the past and which continues to grow now; that is why I should not have said 'Now I love you best', because that would be to call a baby full grown, but it is of the essence of babies to keep growing. *Then* is temporal ('at that time') in l. 10, and logical ('therefore') in l. 13. *Still* implies that love's growth continues both in past and present.

115

Those lines that I before have writ do lie,
Even those that said I could not love you dearer,
Yet then my judgement knew no reason why
My most full flame should afterwards burn clearer.
But reckoning time, whose millioned accidents
Creep in 'twixt vows, and change decrees of kings,
Tan sacred beauty, blunt the sharp'st intents,
Diverts strong minds to th' course of alt'ring things.
Alas why, fearing of Time's tyranny,
Might I not then say 'Now I love you best',
When I was certain o'er incertainty,
Crowning the present, doubting of the rest?
Love is a babe, then might I not say so,
To give full growth to that which still doth grow.

8 Diverts] This edition (*conj.* Capell); divert Q 10 'Now . . . best'] MALONE 1790 (*italic*); ~ . . . ~ Q 11 incertainty] Q (in-certainty)

A version of this sonnet was set to music by Henry Lawes. See Willa McLung Evans, 'Lawes's Version of Shakespeare's Sonnet CXVI', *PMLA* 51 (1936), 120–2. The manuscript is New York Public Library, Music Division, Drexel MS 4257, No. 33.

1–2 **Let me not . . . impediments** Much depends here on which *two minds* are married. If it is the poet and the friend then the sonnet follows on from the declarations of love in *115*, and in it the poet is refusing to *admit* ('acknowledge' (*OED* 2b)) that there are any barriers to love, or any changes in his friend which can undo their union. If it refers to a union between the friend and someone else, the poem becomes excessive and potentially ironic in its self-abnegation: 'Do not let *me* become an impediment to your union, because *I* adhere to an elevated and abstract form of love'. *Admit* on this reading means 'To allow of the coexistence or presence' (*OED* 5), or 'To allow to enter, let in, receive (a person or thing)' (*OED* 1).

2 **impediments** echoes the Solemnization of Matrimony in the Book of Common Prayer: 'I require and charge you (as you will answer at the dreadful day of judgement, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed) that if either of you know any impediment, why ye may not lawfully be joined in matrimony, that ye confess it'.

4 **bends . . . remove** yields to change when the loved person ceases to love. See *25*.14 n. Disturbingly, *polyptoton* (the repetition of a word in a different form) is used to insist on constancy: *remover . . . remove* and *alters . . . alteration*. Even words for constancy change form. Compare the proverb 'A perfect love does last eternally' (Dent L539).

5 **mark** landmark (*OED* 9); here probably a star which aids navigation

7 **star to** star that guides, like the pole star
every wandering barque each small vessel lost at sea

8 **Whose worth's unknown** whose value is untested by actual experience (that is, love is presented as a star which gives a direction, but which is too distant ever to be properly valued by those who steer by it)
height Q's 'higth' answers the closing consonant of *worth*.

9 **Time's fool** the plaything of Time; almost the slave of Time. Cf. *124*.13.

10 **compass** range. 'A circular arc, sweep, curve' (*OED* 6a) is also germane to Time's scythe. A mariner's compass (only referred to by Shakespeare in *Coriolanus* 2.3.24) is unlikely to be in play, although as Kerrigan points out the sense may be activated by the maritime context.

12 **bears it out** endures

13 **error and upon me proved** The language is of legal testimony: 'a claim subject to procedural irregularity which is proven against me'. (*OED* s.v. 'error' 4c *Law*. 'A mistake in matter of law appearing on the proceedings of a court of record. *Writ of error*: a writ brought to procure the reversal of a judgement, on the ground of error'.)

116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments; love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no, it is an ever-fixèd mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering barque,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come.
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

0.1 116] BODLEY-CALDECOTT; 119 Q (*all other copies*) 8 worth's] Q; north's *conj*. Walker height] Q (higth)

1 **Accuse me thus** continues the legal register of the end of the previous sonnet.
scanted all neglected everything
2 **Wherein** by which
3 **to call** (a) to pay my respects; (b) to visit; (c) to pray (as to a divinity)
4 **all bonds** spiritual and emotional ties; perhaps also bonds of a legal sort, possibly of service, established by the friend's *dear-purchased right* (l. 6).
5 **frequent been with** (a) been familiar with (first citation for *OED* 6c); (b) have often been with (pre-dating the first citation for the adverbial usage of *frequent* by five years)
6 **given to time . . . right** wasted the time for which you have paid dearly. The running metaphor is of a bondsman who has reneged on his obligations of service. *Time* functions here as a voracious consumer of duties which should have been paid to the friend.
9 **Book** record
10 **And . . . accumulate** add imaginary sins to those which you can prove. The suggestion is that the sins which are known about are a good foundation for further suppositions. Q punctuates 'surmise, accumilate'.
11 **within the level of** within the range and aim (as of a gun)
12 **wakened hate** in the first rush of passion
13 **appeal** effort to overturn the findings of a lower court by referring the case to a higher
prove puns on the legal sense of 'to show without reasonable doubt' and to 'try, test'. *Strive* suggests that the case failed, and that the *constancy and virtue* of the friend's love was not or could never be proven.
14 **virtue** (a) power; (b) moral excellence

117

Accuse me thus, that I have scanted all
Wherein I should your great deserts repay,
Forgot upon your dearest love to call,
Whereto all bonds do tie me day by day,
That I have frequent been with unknown minds,
And given to time your own dear-purchased right,
That I have hoisted sail to all the winds
Which should transport me farthest from your sight.
Book both my wilfulness and errors down,
And on just proof, surmise accumulate,
Bring me within the level of your frown,
But shoot not at me in your wakened hate,
  Since my appeal says I did strive to prove
  The constancy and virtue of your love.

10 proof, surmise accumulate] MALONE; ~ ~, accumilate Q

1 **Like as** just as
2 **eager compounds** sharp-tasting mixtures
3 **to . . . purge** we take emetics to purge ourselves in order to forestall the illnesses which are not yet manifest
5 **ne'er-cloying** Kerrigan suggests that Benson's 'neare cloying' indicates a pun on 'never cloying' and 'near cloying' which Q's 'nere' allows. However, Q follows a consistent convention (shared by both compositors) that 'nere' is the contracted form of 'never' and 'neere' is the equivalent of 'near'. Compare the proverb 'Too much honey cloys the stomach' (Dent H560).
6 **frame my feeding** i.e. he turned to a diet of *bitter sauces* to rid himself of the friend's *sweetness*. This defence of infidelity seeks an antipathetic quasi-medical reason for turning from the friend's affection. Compare the proverb 'Sweet meat must have sour sauce' (Dent M839).
7 **welfare** good health
meetness suitableness
8 **To be . . . needing** to make myself ill before there was a true need to be
9 **policy** cunning (with a suggestion of self-defeating ingenuity)
9–10 **t' anticipate . . . assurèd** in order to forestall future sicknesses generated real diseases. *Ills* and *faults* can also convey moral failings. Q punctuates 'Thus pollicie in love t' anticipate | The ills that were, not grew to faults assured', which editors since Gildon have found inadequate.
11 **brought to medicine a healthful state** (a) reduced to the state of needing medicine; (b) subjected to medical interference a state which had formerly been healthy
12 **rank of goodness** puffed up, gorged with goodness
would by ill be curèd wished to be cured by sickness (or by wickedness)

118

Like as to make our appetites more keen
With eager compounds we our palate urge,
As to prevent our maladies unseen
We sicken to shun sickness when we purge;
Even so, being full of your ne'er-cloying sweetness,
To bitter sauces did I frame my feeding,
And, sick of welfare, found a kind of meetness
To be diseased ere that there was true needing.
Thus policy in love, t' anticipate
The ills that were not, grew to faults assurèd,
And brought to medicine a healthful state,
Which, rank of goodness, would by ill be curèd.
But thence I learn, and find the lesson true,
Drugs poison him that so fell sick of you.

5 ne'er-cloying] Q (nere cloying); neare cloying BENSON 10 were not] GILDON; ~,~ Q assurèd] Q; assur'd MALONE 1790 12 curèd] Q; cur'd MALONE 1790

1 **potions** medicinal or intoxicating drinks
siren tears tears which allure and ensnare. The Sirens are part women, part birds who attempt by the sweetness of their song to lure mariners to their deaths. See *Odyssey* 12.165–200. Here the *tears* are *siren* probably because they are the tears of lovers who have drawn the poet away from the friend. Kerrigan notes links with *147*, in which the mistress is described as inwardly black as hell.

2 **limbecks** apparatus for distilling. Eyes are also presented as limbecks which distil out tears in Thomas Lodge's *Phyllis* (1593), 37.11. In Barnabe Barnes's *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* 49 there is a similar conjunction: 'A Siren which within thy breast doth bath her, | A fiend which doth in graces garments grath [clothe] her, | A fortress whose force is impregnable: | From my love's limbeck still stilled tears, oh tears!' For a further possible echo of this passage, see *A Lover's Complaint*, l. 316 n.

3 **Applying . . . fears** The language is medical, and the processes antipathetic, seeking to drive out one ill by another: *OED* s.v. 'apply' 3 *trans.* 'to administer a remedy of any kind'. The *antimetabole* (repetition of *hopes* and *fears* in inverse order) evokes a hopeless effort to recombine ailments in order to make them into cures.

7 **spheres** The eyes are compared to planets shaken from their orbits by convulsions. Cf. *Kinsmen* 5.2.45–6: 'Torturing convulsions from his globy eyes | Had almost drawn their spheres'. There may also be a play on the social sense of *spheres*, 'their proper social arena', although this sense was not fully established *c.*1600, and the first cited instance of it is still very strongly linked with its astrological origins: ' 'Twere all one | That I should love a bright particular star | And think to wed it, he is so above me. | In his bright radiance and collateral light | Must I be comforted, not in his sphere' *(All's Well* 1.1.84–8).

7 **fitted** *OED* cites this passage alone to support 'fit' *v.*[2]: 'forced by fits or paroxysms *out of* (the usual place)', which suits the context of a *madding fever*. Ingram and Redpath suggest 'displaced from [i.e. made not to fit into] their proper sphere'. This is not impossible, since the senses of 'fit' v.[1] were very flexible *c.*1600.

9 **O benefit of ill** What benefit comes of (a) disease; (b) hardship; (c) wickedness. The word 'bene*fit*' picks out and renders beneficial the *fit* of l. 6.

10 **still** continually, with perhaps a trace of a pun on the *stills* of l. 2. Compare the proverbs 'A broken bone (leg) is the stronger when it is well set' (Dent B515) and 'The falling out of lovers is a renewing of love' (Dent F40).

13 **content** source of content, the friend

14 **spent** (a) paid out; (b) wasted; with a possible play on the 'spending' or ejaculation of semen

119

What potions have I drunk of siren tears,
Distilled from limbecks foul as hell within,
Applying fears to hopes, and hopes to fears,
Still losing when I saw myself to win?
What wretched errors hath my heart committed,
Whilst it hath thought itself so blessèd never?
How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted
In the distraction of this madding fever?
O benefit of ill, now I find true
That better is by evil still made better,
And ruined love, when it is built anew,
Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.
So I return rebuked to my content,
And gain by ills thrice more than I have spent.

1 siren] Q (*Syren*) 7 fitted] Q; flitted *conj*. Lettsom in Dyce 1866

1–4 The poet's earlier experience of neglect by his friend (*35–6*, *40–42*, *92–6*) gives him a means of inferring what the friend may now be suffering, and this in turn makes him appreciate the severity of his *transgression*.

1 **befriends** is used with a deliberate irony to mean 'is a source of comfort to me' or 'gives a sense of proximity to you through a suffering which we have both endured'.

2 **then** i.e. when I was mistreated by you

3 **bow** stoop penitently as under a weight of sin; 'To bend the body, knee, or head, in token of reverence, respect, or submission; to make obeisance' (*OED* 6).

4 **nerves** sinews

6 **hell of time** hellish time. Cf. *58.13* and *119.2* for the poet's experience of hell.

8 **weigh . . . crime** 'consider how I once suffered from your similar wrongdoing'. *Suffered in your crime* would have seemed grammatically odd even to early readers. *Suffer* can mean 'to labour as under a physical weight' (*sub-ferro*), which ties in with *weigh* and the burden which makes the poet *bow*; it can also mean 'to undergo martyrdom'. There is no clear precedent for its use with the preposition *in* (except in adverbial phrases, as in *Macbeth* 2.3.125–6: 'when we have our naked frailties hid, | That suffer in exposure'). This suggests an exceptional union of suffering: 'I suffered the pangs of martyrdom by participating in the experience of your crime'.

9 **night of woe** darkest period of grief. *Our* presents their sorrow as mutual and simultaneous, whereas the rest of the sonnet presents the lovers' several woes as sequential and separate.
rememb'red reminded

10 **deepest sense** most profound level of apprehension. *Sense* unites both tactile, emotional, and rational apprehension.

11–12 **And soon . . . fits!** 'and if only it had prompted me quickly to offer to you, as you had offered to me in our night of woe, the healing balm of a humble apology, the best cure for a wounded heart'. The grammatical subject of *tend'red* is technically *our night of woe*, which prompts a memory of pain from *my deepest sense*, which in turn prompts the offer of an apology. Q has no comma after 'then', but it seems reasonable to supply one to emphasize that the period of earlier separation and reconciliation referred to is the same throughout.

13 **that your trespass** that offence of yours
fee a payment, benefit

14 **Mine . . . me** my trespass pays the debt which was owing as a result of your trespass, and your trespass in the past must serve to annul the debt which is owing as a result of my recent offence. *Ransom* suggests both the mechanical paying of a debt and a wider, potentially theological, sense of 'liberates' or even 'redeems': so 'your earlier trespass serves to liberate me from the burden of guilt which makes me bow'.

120

That you were once unkind befriends me now,
And for that sorrow, which I then did feel,
Needs must I under my transgression bow,
Unless my nerves were brass or hammered steel.
For if you were by my unkindness shaken,
As I by yours, y' have passed a hell of time,
And I, a tyrant, have no leisure taken
To weigh how once I suffered in your crime.
O that our night of woe might have rememb'red
My deepest sense how hard true sorrow hits,
And soon to you, as you to me then, tend'red
The humble salve, which wounded bosom fits!
But that your trespass now becomes a fee;
Mine ransoms yours, and yours must ransom me.

4 hammered] GILDON; hammered (*i.e. hammerèd*) Q 11 you, . . . me then,] STAUNTON (*conj.* Walker); ~, . . . ~ ~ Q; ~, . . . ~,~ MALONE (*conj.* Capell); ~ . . . ~ ~ INGRAM AND REDPATH

1–2 **'Tis better . . . being** 'It is preferable actually to be a vile person than to be thought one, when in the eye of the world one receives all the odium of being vile when one is not in fact so.' *Vile* is an extremely strong expression of contempt in the period, which ranges from 'worthless' to 'utterly depraved'. It can carry a charge of sexual sin. Compare the proverb 'There is small difference to the eye of the world in being nought and being thought so' (Dent D336).

3–4 **And . . . seeing** The primary sense is 'and the legitimate pleasure is lost when an affair is termed "vile", not by those who experience it but by those who look on'. Rippling across this are secondary senses: 'and one does not even get the pleasure which is rightfully due to what is termed vile behaviour—what is not felt by us to be vile behaviour, but what is presented as being vile by malevolent observers'. *So deemèd* (termed such) could refer back to *vile* or to *pleasure*. This allows two secondary senses: (a) we do not even feel what they call pleasure as pleasure; (b) those who think a love affair is vile also think (pruriently and erroneously) that pleasure comes from it.

5 **adulterate** (a) defiled, contaminated; (b) adulterous. Sense (b) is given support by *false*, which can mean 'sexually unfaithful' as well as 'inaccurate'.

6 **Give . . . blood** ranges in sense from the morally neutral 'greet my lively spirits' to 'give a knowing wink at my randyness'. For this latter sense (*OED* 2) of *sportive* see *Richard III* 1.1.14–15: 'But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks, | Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass'.

7 **frailties . . . frailer spies** 'why do those who are more susceptible to sexual failings than me spy on my failings?' *Frail* implies weakness and susceptibility to passions, especially to sexual desires. *Frailer* means 'people who are frailer than me'.

8 **Which** who
in their wills count in their passionate nature consider. *OED* s.v. 'will' 2 *spec.* 'Carnal desire or appetite', as in *Lucrece* ll. 246–7. The phrase also suggests the arbitrary imposition of a particular value on something which is morally neutral via *OED* 9a: 'Undue assertion of one's own will; wilfulness, self-will'.

9 **I am that I am** alludes to God's mysterious words to Moses in Exodus 3: 14. This is not to claim divinity: rather 'I know in my private counsels what kind of man I am (and I am not perfect, but I am better than they say)'.
level 'To aim (a missile, weapon)' (*OED* 7a)

10 **reckon up their own** count up the sum of their own sins; perhaps also call to judgement or account

11 **bevel** crooked (*OED* 2; first cited usage)

12 **rank** sexually depraved; overabundant to the point of decay

13 **general evil** universal maxim that the world is evil; also with a suggestion that holding such a maxim to be true is itself evil. The phrase hints at the doctrine of original corruption which has been implied in much of the sonnet.

14 **reign** prevail, prosper, flourish (*OED* 2c; almost obsolete by 1600); perhaps also 'glory in'. It is not possible to be sure if the *general evil* is just the first half of this line ('all men are bad'), and that those who utter this maxim are supreme in their badness, or if it extends to include the whole line ('all men are bad and in their badness reign').

121

'Tis better to be vile than vile esteemèd,
When not to be receives reproach of being,
And the just pleasure lost which is so deemèd
Not by our feeling, but by others' seeing.
For why should others' false adulterate eyes
Give salutation to my sportive blood?
Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,
Which in their wills count bad what I think good?
No, I am that I am, and they that level
At my abuses reckon up their own;
I may be straight though they themselves be bevel.
By their rank thoughts my deeds must not be shown,
  Unless this general evil they maintain:
  All men are bad and in their badness reign.

1 esteemèd] Q; esteem'd GILDON 1714 3 deemèd] Q; deem'd GILDON 1714

1 **thy tables** possibly a commonplace book containing compositions, as in *77*

2 **Full charactered** stamped out in full. The process of writing or printing is here used as an analogy for mental processes, as in *Hamlet* 1.3.58–9: 'And these few precepts in thy memory | See thou character'.

3 **that idle rank** the row of mere physical letters in the book which he was given

5 **Or at the least** Claims that verse gives immortality are often qualified, as when Horace, *Odes* 3.30.8–9, says, 'I shall be read as long as the priest accompanied by the silent virgin ascends the Capitol' (see 55.1–2). This qualification is unusually pointed, however: the immortality offered by the record of memory is as frail as life itself.

6 **Have faculty . . . subsist** Have the ability, given to them by nature, to survive. The senses are referred to in this period as 'corporal faculties', as are the powers of the mind (including memory), which are sometimes presented as having a power of retention akin to print, as in Abraham Fraunce's *Lawyers Logic* (1588), fo. 2^{r}, which describes natural reason as 'that *ingraven* gift and faculty of wit and reason'.

7 **each** both *brain* and *heart*
razed oblivion the flat landscape of oblivion in which all monuments are razed to the ground; also continuing the metaphor of the memory as a text via *OED* 'raze' *v.* 3 *spec.* 'To erase or obliterate (writing, etc.) by scraping or otherwise'.

8 **thy record . . . missed** the memory (presented as a written record) of you can never go astray

9 **That poor retention** that weak receptacle of memory, the table book. *OED* cites this passage under 'retention' 2a: 'The fact of retaining things in the mind; the power or ability to do this; memory', which ignores the fact that this sense is made material here ('physical record'). A pun on sense 3a of *retention* is in the air ('The action or fact of keeping to oneself or in one's own hands, under one's power or authority'), since the poet is apologizing for having failed to keep the table book.

10 **tallies** material records (literally, sticks marked with notches to record quantities)

12 **those tables** the tables, or writing tablets, of his memory
receive thee more The general sense is 'retain your image better'. *Receive* unites a range of senses: welcomes you more frequently (*OED* 9a), 'takes your impression more fully' (*OED* 4b: 'To admit (an impression, etc.) by yielding or by adaptation of surface'). This would continue the metaphors of printing and physically recording. Another possibility is 'To take into the mind; to apprehend mentally' (*OED* 7).

13 **adjunct** external aid. See *91.5*.

14 **import** (a) cause, introduce (*OED* 4); (b) mean, signify (*OED* 5b)

122

Thy gift, thy tables, are within my brain
Full charactered with lasting memory,
Which shall above that idle rank remain
Beyond all date even to eternity;
Or at the least so long as brain and heart
Have faculty by nature to subsist,
Till each to razed oblivion yield his part
Of thee, thy record never can be missed.
That poor retention could not so much hold,
Nor need I tallies thy dear love to score,
Therefore to give them from me was I bold
To trust those tables that receive thee more.
To keep an adjunct to remember thee
Were to import forgetfulness in me.

1 Thy gift] BENSON; TThy guift Q

1 **No!** The exclamation mark is Q's, one of only five in the volume. The poem may be indebted to Propertius 3.2: 'Not sumptuous Pyramids to skies upreared, | Nor Elean Jove's proud Fane, which heaven compeered | Nor the rich fane of Mausoleus' tomb, | Are privileged from death's extremest doom' (trans. in John Weever, *Ancient Funerall Monuments* (1631), 3).

2 **pyramids** are associated in the period both with pride and with the immortalizing ambitions of artists. Usually the word describes what is now called an obelisk (i.e. a pointed column). See e.g. Ben Jonson's 'Epistle to Elizabeth Countess of Rutland', ll. 83–4: 'There like a rich and golden pyramid, | Borne up by statues, shall I rear your head'. Historical allusions have been sensed: the obelisks erected in Rome in 1586–9 by Pope Sixtus V (Hotson; improbable given the early date), or those erected by the 3,000 carpenters who laboured to create the setting for James I's triumphal entry in to London in 1604 (Alfred Harbage, 'Dating Shakespeare's Sonnets', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 1 (1950), 62–3). However, rebuilding the pyramids was a type of vainly ambitious labour, as in Thomas Storer, *The Life and Death of Thomas Wolsey* (1599), ll. 449–55: 'He might as well appoint some artless swain, | In Pytheas' place to build Mausolus' tomb; | To rear th' Egyptian Pyramids again, | Restore the ruins of declining Rome, | Or put some shepherdess to Arachne's loom'.

4 **dressings of a former sight** (a) mere adornments of what we have already seen; (b) re-erections of things we have already seen. The *pyramids built up with newer might*, apparently ancient structures created anew, initiates the poem's deliberate confusion of what is old and what is new, and of the relative values of each.

6 **foist . . . old** whatever old thing you try to persuade us is new

7 **born to our desire** appear newly created to suit our wishes. Wyndham takes Q's 'borne' as 'bourn' (limit), which makes good sense for l. 7 but not for l. 8.

9 **registers** official written records

10 **Not wond'ring at** refusing to marvel at

11–12 **For thy . . . haste** 'For neither your records of the past nor what we ourselves see are reliable; each changes in its perspective as time passes.' *Made more or less* probably means that the present seems less when it is superseded by the future, and the distant past comes to seem greater than it is by virtue of its antiquity. The phrase also allows for sudden random shifts in value as time passes. *Records* is stressed on the second syllable.

13 **This . . . this** Behind the second *this* one might hear 'this sonnet (which embodies the vow)', harking back to the usage in *18*.14.

14 **true** faithful. The earlier claim that time distorts relative values suggests also 'speak accurately'.

123

No! Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change.
Thy pyramids built up with newer might
To me are nothing novel, nothing strange;
They are but dressings of a former sight.
Our dates are brief, and therefore we admire
What thou dost foist upon us that is old,
And rather make them born to our desire
Than think that we before have heard them told.
Thy registers and thee I both defy,
Not wond'ring at the present, nor the past,
For thy records, and what we see, doth lie,
Made more or less by thy continual haste.
This I do vow and this shall ever be:
I will be true despite thy scythe and thee.

7 born] Q (borne); borne (*i.e. bourn*) WYNDHAM

1 **If my . . . state** if my deep affection were merely the product of circumstances. *Dear love* glances at the object of love, its costs and its value. *State* ranges in sense through 'fortune', 'status', 'wealth', 'dignity appropriate to high standing', to 'the body politic'.

2 **It might . . . unfathered** It might be regarded as merely the bastard child of Fortune, denied its true paternity, and rendered subject to time. That is, his love is not simply fathered by accidental circumstances. Q reads 'unfathered' (i.e. 'unfatherèd'), probably because compositor B was thrown by the feminine rhyme.

3 **As subject** (a) and become a creature subject to; (b) as being a creature subject to

4 **among . . . flowers** mingled in aimlessly with weeds and flowers, all subject to Time's scythe. It is likely that the second 'flowers' is disyllabic.

5 **accident** contingency, the influence of chance; secondary attributes rather than primary qualities. *Accidere* means 'that which falls out', and the etymological association with falling is brought out by *builded*: this edifice will not fall.

6 **It suffers . . . pomp** (a) surrounded by the favours of the great it does not deteriorate; (b) in majestic confidence it does not deteriorate. The potentially negative senses of *suffers not* are hard to accommodate here: 'does not endure', 'does not tolerate the presence of' provide a melancholy undertow which is not fully worked into the main argument.

7 **blow of thrallèd discontent** (a) the sudden impact of rebellion by those who are resentfully subject to its power (continuing the metaphor of the love as an unassailable monarch in *smiling pomp*); (b) the spiritually imprisoning effects of melancholy.

8 **Whereto . . . calls** which (i.e. *discontent*) is particularly tempting for men of our type these days. *Fashion* means 'mode of behaviour', hence 'our type of people', but also suggests that time is changing fashions of behaviour more generally. Kerrigan relates to the vogue for melancholy (*discontent*) in the late sixteenth century.

9 **policy**, **that heretic** self-interested scheming, personified as a betrayer of truths. The standard gloss on *heretic* ('one who holds opinions differing from the established faith', Schmidt) is inadequate: heretics are here associated with political duplicity and rebellion (*thrallèd discontent*), as Jesuits were widely believed to conceal their true faith and to conspire against the Protestant monarchy. Some commentators detect allusions to the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, but any of the many real or imagined Catholic plots from the 1570s onwards could have prompted this association.

10 **works on . . . hours** 'dissolves leases which are already of too short a date'. The received gloss is 'takes up only short-term commitments'. This is inadequate because *leases* never refer to contracts of employment but always to contracts determining land or property tenure. More probable is Pooler's gloss 'like a tenant on a short lease who exhausts the land in his own immediate interests'. But to *work on* in Shakespeare is often associated with deceptive corruption, as in *Othello* 1.3.383: 'The better shall my purpose work on him', and 4.1.277: 'Or did the letters work upon his blood . . . ?' Policy works to accelerate the end of love before the short lease of life is destroyed.

11 **hugely politic** gigantic in its self-dependent prudence. The opposition between *policy* (scheming short-termism) and being *politic* ('Apt at pursuing a policy; sagacious, prudent, shrewd' (*OED* 2)) is fine, since the word can be used 'in a sinister sense: Scheming, crafty' (*OED* 2d). The love seems to possess to a superior degree the powers of political manipulation of *policy, that heretic*, and so remains ruler over it.

13 **fools of Time** those who are in the service of time (as jesters); hence the objects of both mockery and control. The general sense of the couplet is that the poet has an awareness of the permanent truth of his love which is normally only experienced by those who are about to die and repent of their subservience to time; by calling such changeable beings to witness its truths, however, the poem does end with a decidedly unreliable testimony to permanence.

14 **Which die . . . crime** who die to acquire the reputation of virtuous martyrs, who have committed crimes in their lives. Historical allusions have been found here: the Catholic Gunpowder plotters of 1605, the Earl of Essex, who was executed after his rebellion in 1601, the Protestant Marian martyrs of the 1550s, and the Elizabethan Jesuits are favourites. The reference is more general: prisoners on the scaffold,

124

If my dear love were but the child of state
It might for Fortune's bastard be unfathered,
As subject to time's love, or to time's hate,
Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gathered.
No, it was builded far from accident,
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
Under the blow of thrallèd discontent,
Whereto th' inviting time our fashion calls.
It fears not policy, that heretic,
Which works on leases of short-numb'red hours,
But all alone stands hugely politic,
That it nor grows with heat, nor drowns with show'rs.
To this I witness call the fools of Time,
Which die for goodness, who have lived for crime.

2 unfathered] Q (unfathered, i.e. *unfatherèd*) 4 gathered] Q (gatherd) 13 fools] Q (foles)

especially those condemned for treason, frequently stated their loyalty and allegiance to the crown after having *lived for crime*.

1 **Were 't . . . canopy** 'Would it mean anything to me if I had carried the ornamental awning borne over the head of a dignitary?' At the coronation the *canopy* was normally carried by members of the aristocracy or favoured courtiers. The first eight lines of the sonnet respond to the accusations levelled at the poet; the person who makes the allegations is referred to as a *suborned informer* in l. 13.

2 **With . . . honouring** honouring with shows of outward respect the public appearance of dignity. This is the *OED*'s only citation for *extern* used as a noun meaning 'outward appearance'.

3 **great bases** (a) substantial foundations; (b) magnificent pedestals (*OED* s.v. 'base' 4), on which eternity, like a statue, could rest

4 **Which proves** (a) referring back to *bases* (a plural subject may concord with a verb ending in 's'); (b) referring (paradoxically) to *eternity*.

5 **dwellers on . . . favour** (a) those who concentrate on courtly manners and procedures; (b) those who live for beauty and outward appearance

6–7 **paying . . . savour** activates the metaphor of *dwellers on*. Those who pay all they have to live in smart areas give up simple health-giving fare for pleasant-tasting, complex (and implicitly unwholesome) foods. Q has no comma after *rent* and a semicolon after *sweet*, suggesting the rent is paid for the *compound sweet*.

8 **Pitiful thrivers** people who appear to be successful in material matters, but who actually are wretched, and deserving of pity

8 **in their gazing spent** used up by gawping at nobility. *Spent* continues the idea that being *a dweller on form and favour* (someone who is obsessed by and lives on beauty) is expensive. *Gazing* may conceivably mark an allusion to the Book of Common Prayer, which urges believers not to 'stand by as gazers and lookers on them that do Communicate'.

9 **obsequious** one who follows after (in mourning or respect; picking up the metaphor of formalized devotion from l. 1). The sense 'fawning, cringing, sycophantic' (*OED* 2) is emerging in this period, but here is neutralized by the ritual devotions evoked by *oblation* in the next line.

in thy heart that is, internally, privately only

10 **oblation** ritual offering, often to God

11 **mixed with seconds** unadulterated; not a *compound*. Second pressings of oil, and second crops of honey and wheat are inferior to the first (*OED* 3).

11–12 **knows no art, | But mutual render** is capable of no sharp practice, indeed only has the ability to offer what is mine in fair exchange for what is yours (although the exchange seems one-sided: *me for thee* without any clear return). Q follows *art* with a comma, reinforcing the effect of the line ending ('has no ability to deceive') and pushing *But* towards 'but is rather'.

13 **suborned informer** seller of (false) information to the enemy

14 **impeached** accused (usually of a serious crime, sometimes a crime against the state)

125

Were 't aught to me I bore the canopy,
With my extern the outward honouring,
Or laid great bases for eternity,
Which proves more short than waste or ruining?
Have I not seen dwellers on form and favour
Lose all and more by paying too much rent,
For compound sweet forgoing simple savour,
Pitiful thrivers in their gazing spent?
No, let me be obsequious in thy heart,
And take thou my oblation, poor but free,
Which is not mixed with seconds, knows no art,
But mutual render, only me for thee.
  Hence, thou suborned informer: a true soul
  When most impeached, stands least in thy control.

7 sweet forgoing] MALONE (*conj.* Capell); sweet; Forgoing Q

This poem concludes the Sonnets to the friend in an amputated form (six pentameter couplets followed in Q by two pairs of italic brackets to indicate the expected thirteenth and fourteenth lines). Many editors omit the brackets as compositorial. As a part of the typographical effect of Q they should certainly be retained: they highlight the frustrated expectations created by the poem's form. The curves of the lunulae (or brackets) may graphically evoke both a crescent moon and the curve of Time's sickle. See John Lennard, *But I Digress: The Exploitation of Parentheses in English Printed Verse* (Oxford, 1991), 41–3. The effect is deliberately of abrupt termination, as in Hotspur's dying lines, 'No, Percy, thou art dust, | And food for—' (*1 Henry IV* 5.4.84–5). The numbering of the sonnet is significant, as Graziani points out ('Numbering' (see headnote to Sonnet *60*), 79–82), since 126 is double the 'grand climacteric' of 63, in which men were believed to undergo a potentially deadly climax in mental and physical constitution. See headnote to *63*.

1 **lovely boy** This form of address (used only here in the Sonnets) is also found in an explicitly homosexual poem in Philemon Holland's translation of Plutarch's *Moralia*: 'So often as these eyes of mine behold | That beardless youth, that smooth and lovely boy, | I faint, I fall: then wish I him to hold | Within mine arms, and so to die with joy', *The Philosophy, Commonly Called the Morals* (1603), 1130. The Indian boy who causes Oberon's jealousy of Titania in *Dream* 2.1.22 is also called a 'lovely boy', as is Cyparissus (who was also loved by a man) in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* ll. 154–5: 'Sylvanus weeping for the lovely boy | That now is turned into a cypress tree'.

1–2 **power . . . glass** The *glass* is likely to be an hourglass full of sand ('A sand-glass for the measurement of time; *esp.* an hour-glass', *OED* 6a), as in *All's Well* 2.1.165–6: 'Or four-and-twenty times the pilot's glass | Hath told the thievish minutes how they pass', and in Time's boast in *Winter's Tale* 4.1.16: 'I turn my glass, and give my scene such growing'. It could also be a 'mirror' reflecting back to the lovers their own ageing (which would fit with *therein show'st*), as in 3.1 and *22*.1. The friend's *power* is either way limited by the fickleness of Time's *glass*: controlling an hourglass does not enable one to alter the flow of its sand, nor does one's ownership of a mirror affect what it reflects.

2 **his sickle hour** the hour in which he uses his sickle, hence the moment of death. Q reads 'fickle glass, his ſickle, hower', which has led editors to give to Time three attributes: a *glass* in the sense of 'mirror', a sickle, and an *hour* in the sense 'hour-glass'. However, Time only has two hands, one for a sickle and the other for an hourglass. The lines gain their effect through the uneasy parallelism between the *fickle glass* and the *sickle hour*, juxtaposing mutability and necessary mortality in phrases of which the individual elements seem grammatically deliquescent: the *sickle* functions adjectivally, and through its initial long ſ recalls *fickle*. The *glass* fickly turns from an hourglass to a mirror, the *hour* from a day of reckoning to an hourglass, an emblem of the continuing slippage of time.

3 **by waning grown** by growing old you have become more. *Waning* recalls the cycles of the moon, which *wanes* in order then to wax larger. The word is echoed from *11*.1.

therein (a) in doing so (i.e. in achieving such control over the attributes of Time to which mortals are normally subject); (b) in the glass

4 **lovers withering** your lovers ageing (like plants, recalling *15*.5). *Lovers* follows Q, which does not use possessive apostrophes: the form 'louers' also could be read with *withering* as a verbal noun rather than a participle: so 'lover's' and 'lovers''. This variety of senses allows for both a note of personal elegy, and a hint that there have been other lovers.

5 **wrack** destruction, decay. As *sovereign mistress over wrack* Nature can prevent the ageing process; but the same phrase admits the pessimistic interpretation 'sole monarch over what is no more than ruins'.

6 **As thou . . . back** as you proceed towards death [Nature] always will attempt to pull you back. *Still* functions both with *goest* and with *will pluck*; the former battles with the latter, as the friend's progress to death continues always. *Pluck* can denote a violent or destructive action, as when it is used of Time in *19*.3.

7 **skill** ability; perhaps 'cleverness, expertness' (*OED* 6a)

8 **wretched minutes kill** Time is represented as a monarch, who has enough initial

126

O thou my lovely boy, who in thy power
Dost hold Time's fickle glass, his sickle hour;
Who hast by waning grown, and therein show'st
Thy lovers withering as thy sweet self grow'st—
If Nature (sovereign mistress over wrack)
As thou goest onwards still will pluck thee back,
She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill
May Time disgrace, and wretched minutes kill.
Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure:
She may detain, but not still keep, her treasure!
Her audit (though delayed) answered must be,
And her quietus is to render thee.
(*)*
(*)*

2 fickle] Q; tickle *conj*. Kinnear in Rollins 2 his sickle hour] TYLER; sickle, hower Q; fickle hower LINTOT; sickle-hour HUDSON 1881 (*conj.* Walker); tickle hour *conj*. Anon. in Rollins 2 8 minutes] MALONE (*conj.* Capell); mynuit Q 11 audit] Q (*Audite*) 12 quietus] Q (*Quietus*) 13–14] *The italic parentheses appear in* Q, *but are omitted by many editors following Malone*

dignity to be *disgraced* when defeated; the *wretched minutes* are the smallest subservient units of time, which are killed without compunction.

9 **her** i.e. Nature. Anything which *grows* (like a flower) might reasonably fear a hand which *plucks*.
minion 'darling, favourite; . . . c. *esp.* A favourite of a sovereign, prince, or other great person; *esp.* opprobriously, one who owes everything to his patron's favour, and is ready to purchase its continuance by base compliances' (*OED n.*[1] 1).

10 **detain . . . treasure!** To *detain* continues the idea that Nature *plucks back* the friend (*OED* s.v. 'detain' 5 'to hinder; to delay'); it may also mean 'to keep back what is due or claimed' (*OED* 2a), as Nature and Time are struggling for ownership. The opposition between *detain* and *keep* is that between temporary (and perhaps illegitimate) tenure and permanent retention (*keep* meaning 'guard, defend, protect, preserve, save' (*OED* 14); also perhaps 'hold as a captive or prisoner' (*OED* 25)).

10 **still** always (*OED* 3a). 'To pay one's debt to nature' was a proverbial expression for death (Dent D168).

11 **answered** paid ('To satisfy a pecuniary claim' (*OED* 7))

12 **And her quietus is to render thee.** 'The satisfaction of her debt is to give you up.' *Quietus* is the technical term to mark the settling of a debt, at the time of an *audit*, as in Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* 3.2.186–7: 'You had the trick in audit-time to be sick, | Till I had signed your *quietus*'. Since the friend is merely *detained* (held without proper ownership) the poem prepares for the ruthless justice of its conclusion. The *mutual render* of *125*.12 turns into the irrevocable yielding up of the friend, who must pay his debt to Nature like all other mortals ('Thou owest God a death', says Prince Harry to Falstaff and abruptly exits, *1 Henry IV* 5.1.126, echoing the proverb 'Death pays all debts' (Dent D148)). Although the syntax of the poem is complete, the brackets create the impression that *render* could be functioning as a transitive verb, of which the object is sliced away by the sickle hour of time, bracketed to oblivion.

Sonnet *127* begins a group of sonnets which are chiefly about a mistress with dark hair and dark eyes whom Shakespeare never calls a 'lady', let alone the 'dark lady' favoured by his biographical critics. Scores of women with dark hair and dark eyes who were capable of doing dark deeds have been identified as her historical original (see Samuel Schoenbaum, 'Shakespeare's Dark Lady: A Question of Identity' in Philip Edwards, Inga-Stina Ewbank, and G. K. Hunter, eds., *Shakespeare's Styles: Essays in Honour of Kenneth Muir* (Cambridge, 1980), 221–39). Her appearance is designed to enable the sonnets to dwell on the paradoxes of finding 'fair' (beautiful) something which is 'dark'. This group is likely to contain the earliest Sonnets in the sequence, for two reasons: (a) two of them appear in *The Passionate Pilgrim* of 1598 (*138* and *144*); (b) there are no late rare words in this part of the sequence. On which, see Hieatt, Hieatt, and Prescott, 'When did Shakespeare Write *Sonnets* 1609?' (see headnote to Sonnet *103*).

1 **black . . . fair** Dark colouring (dark hair and dark eyes) was not considered beautiful (with a pun on *fair* meaning 'blonde').

2 Modifies the previous line: 'or if it was called *fair* it wasn't called beautiful'.

3 **successive heir** the true inheritor by blood. *Successive* is a standard term to describe hereditary succession (*OED* 3b) as in *The Spanish Tragedy* 3.1.14: 'Your King, | By hate deprivèd of his dearest son, | The only hope of our successive line'.

4 **And beauty . . . shame** (a) beauty is declared illegitimate; (a) beauty is publicly shamed with having borne a bastard. The desire for paradox here creates a genealogical problem: *beauty* is both the source of due succession and its own illegitimate offspring.

5 **put on Nature's power** usurped an office which is properly Nature's (through cosmetics)

6 **Fairing the foul** making the foul beautiful (or blonde). The use of *fair* as a transitive verb is not common, and would have added to the deliberate strangeness here, which anticipates the witches in *Macbeth* 1.1.10: 'Fair is foul, and foul is fair'.

7 **no name . . . bower** no legitimate hereditary title (or reputation) and no sacred inner sanctum. *Bower* is usually glossed as a vague poeticism (so *OED* cites this passage under 1b: 'a vague poetic word for an idealized abode'), but it continues the poem's concern with legitimate succession and bastardy, and means 'a bed-room' (*OED* 2). Not even beauty's bedchamber is safe from profanation.

8 **is profaned** is defiled, perhaps with a suggestion that her holiest places have been invaded

9 **Therefore** because of beauty's profanation (by the abuse of cosmetics) they are black in mourning
raven black Compare the proverb 'As black as a raven' (Dent R32.2).

10 **brows** Q's repetition of 'eyes' has prompted many emendations. Staunton's is the most convincing, since black *brows* (eyebrows) are elsewhere referred to by Shakespeare (*L.L.L.* 4.3.256–8: 'O, if in black my lady's brows be decked | It mourns that painting and usurping hair | Should ravish doters with a false aspect'), and are often treated as expressive (e.g. 'I see your brows are full of discontent', *Richard II* 4.1.320).
so suited and similarly attired, and. *And* may mean 'As if', 'as though' (*OED* 3), as in *Dream* 1.2.77–8: 'I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale'.

11 **At . . . lack** at those who, despite not being born beautiful, do not lack beauty through their use of cosmetics. *Beauty* here almost merits inverted commas, since it has been so thoroughly contaminated by its context.

12 **Sland'ring . . . esteem** giving a bad name to what is natural by making real beauty indistinguishable from false

13 **so** in such a way (leading to *that* in l. 14).
becoming of gracing, suiting so well with that they become beautiful

14 **so** i.e. black like the mistress's eyes

127

In the old age black was not counted fair,
Or if it were it bore not beauty's name;
But now is black beauty's successive heir,
And beauty slandered with a bastard shame:
For since each hand hath put on Nature's power,
Fairing the foul with Art's false borrowed face,
Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bower,
But is profaned, if not lives in disgrace.
Therefore my mistress' eyes are raven black,
Her brows so suited, and they mourners seem
At such who, not born fair, no beauty lack,
Sland'ring creation with a false esteem.
  Yet so they mourn, becoming of their woe,
  That every tongue says beauty should look so.

9 mistress'] Q (Mistersse) 9–10 eyes . . . brows] BROOKE (*conj.* Staunton); eyes . . . eyes Q; eyes . . . hairs CAPELL; hairs . . . eyes *conj.* Walker; brows . . . eyes GLOBE (*conj.* Staunton); eyes . . . brow INGRAM AND REDPATH 10 and] Q; that GILDON; as DYCE 1857

The lover who envies the instrument on which his mistress plays is a cliché in the period. Fastidious Brisk in Jonson's *Every Man Out of his Humour* 3.9.101–6 describes his mistress playing the viola de gamba: 'I have wished myself to be that instrument, I think, a thousand times'. E. C.'s *Emaricdulfe* Sonnet 17 ('I am enchanted with thy snow-white hands') dwells with erotic fascination on his mistress's hands and the music they produce. For a discussion and transcription of the version of this sonnet in Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 152, see R. H. Robbins, 'A Seventeenth Century Manuscript of Shakespeare's Sonnet 128', *NQ* 212 (1967), 137–8. The variants in this transcription illustrate how seventeenth-century miscellanists modified details which they found obscure or inapplicable to their own circumstances.

1 **music** source of sweetness. Cf. *8*.1.

2 **that blessèd wood** the wood of the keyboard, graced by the player's touch

3 **gently sway'st** (a) rule over with gentleness (transitive; the object is *The wiry concord*); (b) move gently in time to the music. The line-ending allows the verb momentarily (and unusually for the period) to be intransitive, 'move gently'.

4 **The wiry . . . confounds** the harmonious sound of the strings which overpowers and amazes my ear

5 **jacks** 'In the virginal, spinet, and harpsichord: An upright piece of wood fixed to the back of the key-lever, and fitted with a quill which plucked the string as the jack rose on the key's being pressed down. (By Shaks. and some later writers erron. applied to the key.)' (*OED* 14); playing on 'a lad, fellow, chap; *esp.* a low-bred or ill-mannered fellow, a "knave" ' (*OED* 2a)
that nimble leap Like agile courtiers, the jacks leap to kiss the player's hand.

6 **the tender inward of thy hand** Compare Leontes' objections when his wife takes Polixenes' hand: 'But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers, | As now they are . . . Still virginalling | Upon his palm?' (*Winter's Tale* 1.2.117–18; 127–8). To paddle palms is to share a quasi-sexual intimacy.

8 **by** beside

9 **tickled** punning on 'excited, stimulated by touch' and 'to play or operate (the keys of a keyboard instrument or machine)' (*OED* 6a)

10 **dancing chips** the keys

11, 14 **thy** Q reads 'their'. On this recurrent error, see *26*.12 n.

13 **saucy jacks** cheeky upstarts (widely used slang)

128

How oft, when thou, my music, music play'st
Upon that blessèd wood whose motion sounds
With thy sweet fingers when thou gently sway'st
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,
Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,
At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand.
To be so tickled they would change their state
And situation with those dancing chips,
O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
Making dead wood more blest than living lips.
  Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
  Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

1 my music] Q; deere deerist BOD4 2 motion] Q; mocions BOD4 3 sway'st ^] Q; swaies, BOD4 5 Do I] Q; o how BOD4 jacks] Q; kies BOD4 leap] Q; leapes BOD4 7 reap] Q; reped BOD4 8 wood's] Q; wood BOD4 9 tickled] Q; tuched BOD4 they] Q; the faine BOD4 11 thy] GILDON; their Q; youre BOD4 13 saucy jacks] Q; then those keyes BOD4 14 thy] BENSON; their fingers Q; youre fingers BOD4 thy lips] Q; youre lipes BOD4

1–2 **Th' expense . . . action** 'The achieved end of lust is the shameful squandering of vital powers.' *Spirit* (disyllabic here) can mean 'semen' (as in Mercutio's bawdy ''Twould anger him | To raise a spirit in his mistress' circle', *Romeo* 2.1.23–4). It could have a more rarefied sense: 'mental energy, vitality'. The *waste of shame* similarly ranges from the extremely carnal (playing on 'waist' to mean 'ejaculating into a shameful waist') to the aridly spiritual ('with the result that one is left in an emptiness of shame').

3 **perjured . . . bloody** false to oaths, prone to kill and maim
full of blame (a) packed with guilt; (b) full of recrimination

4 **extreme** severe, violent
rude brutal, barbarous
not to trust not to be trusted

5 **Enjoyed . . . straight** No sooner does it achieve its ends than it loathes them. *Enjoyed* combines 'To have the use or benefit of' (*OED* 4a) with 4b, 'To have one's will of (a woman)'.

6 **Past reason hunted** sought with an eagerness which is beyond all that is reasonable

8 **On purpose laid** set there with the deliberate desire. *Bait* allures and then kills.

8–9 **mad, | Mad** The *anadiplosis* (repetition at the end of one clause and the beginning of the next) uniquely here bridges the gap between two quatrains. The energy of the poem surges unstoppably. Q reads 'Made', which is an acknowledged sixteenth-century spelling of 'mad'. McLeod (see note on l. 11 below) would retain it. The compulsion evoked by 'Made In pursuit' does contribute to the picture of lust in the sonnet, but *so* requires an adjective to refer back to, which must surely be *mad* rather than 'made'.

9 **so** the same, i.e. *mad*

10 **in quest . . . extreme** Q's 'in quest, to haue extreame' is defended by Robert Graves and Laura Riding in *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (1927), 68–9, on the grounds that Q presents lust as wishing to possess extremity itself. It is unlikely that any early modern reader could have read the line this way, and many read with a quill to hand to correct printers' slips.

11 **A bliss . . . woe** primarily 'A source of delight whilst it is being tried out; once experienced a source of utter misery'. Q's reading, 'A blisse in proofe and proud and very woe', has its champions, notably the tireless anti-editor Randall McLeod, 'Information Upon Information', *Text: Transactions of the Society for Textual Scholarship* 5 (1991), 241–78, who calls the emendation of the second 'and' to 'a' 'stupid' (250). He argues that Q's character string 'proud' could be read as both proud and 'prov'd' by a contemporary reader (compare collation to *Lucrece* l. 712). 'Proud', in the sense of showing pride, does have strong associations with the uncontrollable energies of lust in the Sonnets, but to read 'proud' in a modernized text would be misleading. However, the line in Q is ambiguous. It could, unemended, be read by a seventeenth-century reader as a string of adjectival clauses akin to those in 3–4, making lust 'a bliss in proof and proud and very woe'; or it could reinforce the idea of the previous line that all stages of lust are undifferentiatedly dreadful by reading 'A bliss both while it is being tried out (*in proof*), and when it has been tried out (*proved*), and a source of complete misery'. The chief argument for the emendation of the second 'and' to 'a' is that the line in its emended form moves towards the following line's claim that 'before action lust is a joy; after action it is an insubstantial dream'. Q's lack of pointing is retained here, however: in order to make a link with the previous line it must be possible momentarily to read 'a bliss in proof and proved' as a single unit of sense meaning 'a source of bliss both when one is trying it out and when one has finished trying it out' before the bliss evaporates in woe.

12 **Before . . . dream** in anticipation a joy which is looked forward to; in retrospect an insubstantial dream. Cf. *Lucrece* ll. 211–12.

13 **All this . . . well** Everyone knows this proverbial piece of wisdom; but no one *really* knows when it comes to practice.

14 **hell** (a) hell of guilt; (b) slang for the vagina

129

Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action, and, till action, lust
Is perjured, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
Enjoyed no sooner but despisèd straight,
Past reason hunted, and, no sooner had,
Past reason hated as a swallowed bait
On purpose laid to make the taker mad,
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so,
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme,
A bliss in proof and proved a very woe,
Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows, yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

9 Mad] Q (Made) 11 and proved a] SEWELL; and proud and Q

1 **My . . . sun** *My* is given a proud emphasis to distinguish the poet's mistress from the majority of Elizabethan sonneteers' mistresses. Cf. Henry Constable's *Diana* (1592) 1.7, ll. 9–12: 'No, no, I flatter not, when I thee call | The sun, sith that the sun was never such; | But when the sun I thee compared withal | Doubtless the sun I flatterèd too much'. Lynche's *Diella* (1596) 3 is also a fruitful candidate for parody: 'My mistress' snow-white skin doth much excel | The pure-soft wool Arcadian sheep do bear; | Her hair exceeds gold forced in smallest wire, | In smaller threads than those Arachne spun; | Her eyes are crystal fountains, yet dart fire | More glorious to behold than midday sun; | Her ivory front, (though soft as purest silk) | Looks like the table of Olympic Jove, | Her cheeks are like ripe cherries laid in milk, | Her alabaster neck the throne of Love; | Her other parts so far excel the rest, | That wanting words, they cannot be expressed'. Giles Fletcher's *Licia* 45 compares Licia's eyes first to a comet and then to a sun rising in the west. Shakespeare uses the comparison in 49.6.

2 **Coral** is a stock comparison for lips. See for example Lynche's *Diella* 31.2: 'sweet lips of coral hue but silken softness'; *Zepheria* Canzon 23.1: 'Thy coral coloured lips'; Richard Barnfield, *Cynthia*, Sonnet 6.1: 'Sweet coral lips, where Nature's treasure lies'; and *Venus* l. 542.

3 **dun** dingy brown

4 **wires** a traditional comparison in sonnet sequences. Wire, being made of gold, iron, brass, or copper, could not be black unless tarnished, although Barnabe Barnes, when looking for flaws in his mistress, finds 'A mole upon her forehead, coloured pale, | Her hair disordered, brown and crispèd wiry' (*Parthenophil and Parthenophe* 13.10–11). The anonymous *Zepheria* Canzon 17 sets out the orthodox coiffure of the Petrarchan mistress: 'The golden ceiling of thy brows' rich frame | Designs the proud pomp of thy face's architure: | Crystal transparent casements to the same | Are thine eyes' sun, which do the world depure, | Whose silvery canopy gold wire fringes'.

5 **damasked, red and white** *OED*'s definition ('4. Having the hue of the damask rose') is unhelpful, since *Rosa damascena* includes red, white, and parti-coloured varieties. The reference is probably to *R.* x *damascena* var. *versicolor* ('the York and Lancaster Rose'), which has parti-coloured pink and white petals (and often also pure white or pure pink blooms). *Damasked, red and white* then means 'parti-coloured, I mean red and white on the same rose tree', rather than referring to three separate types of rose. A similar (single) 'rose brier' which bears red and white blooms is referred to in *1 Henry VI* 2.4.0.1.

8 **reeks** rises like smoke. The sense 'to stink' is not recorded before the eighteenth century. However, smoking chimneys 'reek' and so can blood, as in *Lucrece* l. 1377.

11 **go** walk. Goddesses were supposed not to touch the ground, as in *Venus* l. 1028 and n.

13 **rare** exceptional, precious

14 **As any . . . compare** as any woman misrepresented by inaccurate and deceitful comparisons. The poem archly ends with a comparison (*As . . .*). The emphasis falls on *I think*, which confesses a privately held, self-consciously inaccurate belief.

130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun,
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks,
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound.
I grant I never saw a goddess go:
My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

1 **tyrannous** Petrarchan mistresses are traditionally *tyrannous*. It implies 'lacking in pity' and 'enjoying absolute control over my emotions'. See e.g. Bartholomew Griffin, *Fidessa* 47.10, Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella* 47.
so as thou art just as you are (i.e. not 'fair')

3 **dear** functions as both adjective and adverb: tender(ly); expensively.

5 **in good faith** is a reliteralized set phrase. In general conversation it marks a protestation of earnestness; here it also means 'some poor credulous fools genuinely believe that . . .'.

7 **err** stronger than its modern sense: be categorically wrong, or even 'mad'; also with an element of moral disapproval, through *OED* 4, 'To go astray morally; to sin'. The only character in Shakespeare to be told 'Madman, thou errest' is the madly doting Malvolio, *Twelfth Night* 4.2.43.

9 **And to be sure . . . swear** (a) and to testify for certain that what I swear is true . . . ; (b) and certainly what I swear is not false. The absence of punctuation in Q makes (a) the primary sense, but editors often feel a need to draw out (b) by punctuating after *swear*.

10 **but thinking on** just thinking about

11 **One on another's neck** one following rapidly after another, as in Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveller*: 'Passion upon passion would throng one on another's neck', Nashe, ii.262. Compare the proverb 'One misfortune comes on the neck of another' (Dent M1013).

12 **Thy black . . . place** Your blackness is the most beautiful in the eyes of my judgement. The topsyturvyness of *black* being *fairest* is reinforced by the faint suggestion that judgement is put out of its proper *place* by the blackness of the mistress.

13 **deeds** On first reading this means only 'your tyrannical conduct towards me'; if the poem is reread in the light of *133* it might be taken as carrying a wider reference to infidelities.

14 **this slander** the claim that her face *hath not the power to make love groan*. The sonnet has in the background a courtroom drama in which a trial for defamation is being enacted: *swear*, *witness*, *judgement*, and finally *slander* contribute to this milieu.

131

Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art,
As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel,
For well thou know'st to my dear doting heart
Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel.
Yet in good faith some say, that thee behold,
Thy face hath not the power to make love groan;
To say they err I dare not be so bold,
Although I swear it to myself alone.
And to be sure that is not false I swear
A thousand groans but thinking on thy face
One on another's neck do witness bear
Thy black is fairest in my judgement's place.
In nothing art thou black save in thy deeds,
And thence this slander as I think proceeds.

1 **as** as if they were
2 **Knowing . . . disdain** a parenthesis: 'knowing that your heart torments me with its scornful rejection of my suit'. A lady's *disdain* (implying lack of pity and insensibility to the sufferings of the lover) is a standard element in sonnet sequences.
4 **pretty ruth** becoming compassion. That pity was beautiful was a common argument used by sonneteers: the beautiful are supposed also to be pitiful; since the mistress is beautiful she should also be pitiful, and pity consists in yielding to the demands of her lover. See the anonymous *Zepheria* Canzon 7: '(Though by how much the more thou beauteous art, | So much of pity should'st thou more esteem)'. Cf. Donne's 'What if this present were the world's last night?' ll. 9–12: 'but as in my idolatry | I said to all my profane mistresses, | Beauty, of pity, foulness only is | A sign of rigour'.
5 **morning** punning on the eyes as *mourners*
7 **full star** Hesperus the evening star is *full* presumably in the sense 'intense' (*OED* 10b), otherwise not found before 1657.
9 **mourning** Q's 'morning' highlights the pun on 'morning' and 'mourning'.
10 **beseem** suit
12 **And suit . . . pity** and dress your pity in a similar way throughout. That is, make all your body pity me as at present only your eyes do.
14 **And all they foul** and that all of those are ugly who . . .
complexion combines both 'outward appearance' and 'inner mental constitution' through the primary sense of *complexion*, 'the combination of the four 'humours' of the body in a certain proportion' (*OED* 1a), combined with the sense 'skin colour'. Cf. *Merchant* 2.1.1: 'Mislike me not for my complexion, | The shadowed livery of the burnished sun'.

132

Thine eyes I love, and they, as pitying me,
Knowing thy heart torment me with disdain,
Have put on black, and loving mourners be,
Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain.
And truly not the morning sun of heaven
Better becomes the grey cheeks of the east,
Nor that full star that ushers in the even
Doth half that glory to the sober west
As those two mourning eyes become thy face.
O, let it then as well beseem thy heart
To mourn for me, since mourning doth thee grace,
And suit thy pity like in every part.
Then will I swear beauty herself is black,
And all they foul that thy complexion lack.

2 torment] Q; torments BENSON 6 the east] GILDON 1714; th' East Q 9 mourning] Q (morning)

1 **Beshrew** woe to. A mild imprecation in Shakespeare, often used affectionately, as in Northumberland's rebuke to his daughter-in-law: 'Beshrew your heart, | Fair daughter', *2 Henry IV* 2.3.45–6.

2 **deep wound** grave injury; a wound like that inflicted by Cupid's arrow (with a pun on the 'wound' of the vagina)

4 **slave to slavery** completely dominated; a slave subjected to complete, dominating control

6 **And my . . . engrossèd** 'and you have taken my other self, my friend, from me in an act of even greater cruelty'. *Engrossed* originally means to write out (a name etc.) in large letters on a legal document. Shakespeare uses it to mean 'to seek to establish a monopoly in' like a voracious merchant (*OED* 4). Other germane senses include 9a: 'To make (the body) gross or fat; to fatten'. The modern sense of 'absorb attention of completely' is not recorded before the 1680s.

7 **Of . . . forsaken** both 'left by' and 'deprived of'. *My self* functions as a parenthetical gloss on the friend (he is myself, you know) and to mean that the mistress has enslaved the poet.

8 **thrice threefold** The Trinitarian imagery of *105* is darkly recalled here.
crossèd thwarted (*OED* 14). The thrice threefold torment is likely to have pagan provenance (in classical heroic narratives major actions are often performed three times), but *OED* 'cross' *v.* 1, 'to crucify', may be activated by the triple trinity of woes.

10 **my friend's . . . bail** 'let my heart stand bail for that of my friend and go to prison in his stead'. *OED* cites this passage under the rare 'bail' *v.* 3: 'To confine'. This misses the point: the poet imagines presenting his heart as bail for his friend, being imprisoned for him, and then becoming his protector (*guard*) or his prison (*OED* s.v. 'guard' 17a). Line 11 does not gloss what it is to 'bail', but develops a new conceit: 'regardless of who imprisons me, let my heart be his prison warden'.

12 **use rigour** be as hard as strict application of the law allows

13 **pent** imprisoned (also 'enclosed in a sexual embrace')

14 **and all** and everything (which includes the friend)

133

Beshrew that heart that makes my heart to groan
For that deep wound it gives my friend and me.
Is 't not enough to torture me alone,
But slave to slavery my sweet'st friend must be?
Me from myself thy cruel eye hath taken,
And my next self thou harder hast engrossèd.
Of him, myself, and thee I am forsaken,
A torment thrice threefold thus to be crossèd.
Prison my heart in thy steel bosom's ward,
But then my friend's heart let my poor heart bail,
Whoe'er keeps me, let my heart be his guard;
Thou canst not then use rigour in my jail.
And yet thou wilt, for I, being pent in thee,
Perforce am thine, and all that is in me.

6 engrossèd] Q; engross'd MALONE 8 crossèd] Q; cross'd MALONE

1 **So** Many editors (after Capell) make this into an exclamation by adding a comma after *so*. This marks the connection with the end of the previous sonnet. However, *so* also anticipates an unspoken 'in that case' before *Myself I'll forfeit*.

2 **mortgaged** continues the metaphors of substitutive financial binding from the previous poem: to *mortgage* is 'To make over (property, esp. houses or land) as security for a money debt, on condition that if the debt is discharged the grant shall be void'.

3–4 **Myself I'll forfeit . . . still** 'I shall default on the debt and make myself rather than my friend the surety for the debt, so that the mortgaged property (myself) will never be redeemed from your ownership, while the friend will be returned to me.'

3 **that other mine** (a) that other possession of mine; (b) my other self

5 **wilt not . . . will not** you do not intend to . . . he does not wish to. This is the one point in the sonnet at which the poet confesses that the friend's infidelity is voluntary (*he will not*).

7–8 **He learned . . . bind** 'He meant only to stand as surety in my stead (i.e. as someone who agreed to underwrite my debt, as Antonio does in *Merchant*), but found that he had signed a document that bound him to you as tightly as I am bound to you.' On bonds, see *87*.4 n.

9 **The statute . . . take** you will exact the full measure of power afforded by your beauty. The *statute* referred to may be a legal instrument which binds all irrespective of whether or not they have consented to it (and so extends the power of the mistress to make her an absolute legislator), or, more probably, 'A statute merchant or statute staple; a bond or recognizance by which the creditor had the power of holding the debtor's lands in case of default' (*OED* 4a).

10 **Thou usurer . . . use** The mistress is a usurer who will lend out anything in order to gain interest, and control over other people's property. To *put forth* means 'To lay out (money) to profit' as in Jonson's *Every Man Out of his Humour* 2.3.245–8: 'I am determined to put forth some five thousand pound, to be paid me five for one, upon the return of myself, my wife, and my dog from the Turk's court' (*OED* s.v. 'put' 43j).

11 **came debtor** (a) who came as a debtor; (b) who became a debtor

12 **unkind abuse** (a) unnaturally harsh mistreatment (at the hands of the mistress); (b) harsh mistreatment of the friend

14 **He . . . free** 'He has paid the whole sum owing, and yet I am still held subject to my bond.' The pun on *whole* (an alternative spelling for 'hole' in this period) might suggest that the friend is paying for sex with the mistress.

134

So now I have confessed that he is thine,
And I myself am mortgaged to thy will;
Myself I'll forfeit, so that other mine
Thou wilt restore to be my comfort still.
But thou wilt not, nor he will not be free,
For thou art covetous, and he is kind.
He learned but surety-like to write for me,
Under that bond that him as fast doth bind.
The statute of thy beauty thou wilt take,
Thou usurer that put'st forth all to use,
And sue a friend came debtor for my sake:
So him I lose through my unkind abuse.
Him have I lost, thou hast both him and me;
He pays the whole, and yet I am not free.

12 lose] Q (loose)

1 **Will** The poem plays insistently on different senses (a figure known as *antanaclasis*): (a) what you want; (b) what you sexually desire; (c) sexual organs (male and female); (d) the poet's first name (which appears nowhere in the book called *Shakespeares Sonnets* except in the 'Will' poems). Some commentators have suggested it may also be the name of the friend. Q italicizes the word (1, 2 (twice), 11 (twice), 12, 14) which is a standard means of indicating a proper name (although italics are also used to emphasize a rare word or an unusual sense, as in *126*.11). Q's italics are marked here by an initial capital, since they suggest autobiographical allusion (although they seem insignificant in ll. 11–12). It is easy to criticize the poem as a piece of sexual chortling, which rises to venom through its innuendo (*make thy large will more*, meaning 'stretch your cunt even more'). The final 'Will' of the poem, though, does salvage something wittily self-recriminating from the carnal puns, as the poet becomes one universal appetitive will, uniting all lovers and the organs of both sexes into himself. Compare the proverbs 'Women will have their wills' (Dent W723) and 'Will will have will' (Dent W397).

2 **to boot** in addition. Literally 'to the good'.
overplus excess

3 **vex** annoy, agitate

4 **To thy . . . thus** (a) giving you in this way more than you desire (as an over-importunate suitor); (b) filling up your vagina (*sweet will*) with my penis

6 **to hide . . . thine?** More or less a single entendre. Beyond the obvious bawdy sense ('hide my penis in your vagina'), also 'to unite your wishes with mine'.

7 **Shall will . . . gracious** (a) shall other people's 'wills' seem attractive to you; (b) shall my penis appeal to others . . .

8 **fair acceptance** gracious consent, warm welcome
shine appear

9 **The sea . . . still** Compare the proverbs 'The sea refuses no river', and 'The sea is never full' (Tilley S179 and Dent S181). The passage also recalls Ecclesiastes 1: 7: 'All the rivers go into the sea, yet the sea is not full: for the rivers go unto the place whence they return, and go'.

10 **in abundance** (a) in his abundance; (b) abundantly
store rich supply (*OED* 4b). There are echoes here of *1*.5–9.

13 **Let 'no' . . . kill** Let no ungenerous refusal kill any handsome (honest, or earnest) suitors. Q reads 'Let no unkinde, no faire beseechers kill', which could be interpreted as 'Let no unkind mistress kill any handsome suitors' (a standard emphatic use of the double negative) or as 'Let no unkind "no", fair beseechers kill'. The reading offered here is metrically less harsh, although all alternatives would have been possible to an early reader.

14 **Think all but one** Think of all those *fair beseechers* as one man, and think of me as being in that single Will (meaning 'wish, desire, penis and vagina').

135

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy Will,
And Will to boot, and Will in overplus;
More than enough am I that vex thee still,
To thy sweet will making addition thus.
Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,
Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine?
Shall will in others seem right gracious,
And in my will no fair acceptance shine?
The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,
And in abundance addeth to his store;
So thou, being rich in Will, add to thy Will
One will of mine to make thy large Will more.
Let 'no' unkind no fair beseechers kill:
Think all but one, and me in that one Will.

1 Will] Q (*Will; also italicized in 2 twice, 11 twice, 12, and 14*) 13 'no' unkind no] TUCKER; no vnkinde, no Q; no unkind 'No' *conj.* Dowden; Let 'no', unkind, no INGRAM AND REDPATH

1 **check** (a) reprimand (*OED* 11); (b) arrest, stop (*OED* 3)
come so near (a) touch you to the quick (Schmidt, s.v. 'near' 4: 'touching, interesting one's intellect or feelings, coming home to one', sometimes with an erotic flavour, as when Malvolio muses, 'Maria once told me she [Olivia] did affect me, and I have heard herself come thus near, that should she fancy it should be one of my complexion', *Twelfth Night* 2.5.22–5); (b) move physically close to you

3 **there** Will is admitted into the soul to communicate with it; also 'Will' is allowed into your body.

4 **Thus far . . . fulfil** The lack of pointing follows Q. Some editors put commas before and after *sweet*, marking it as a vocative. Q allows for this possibility, as well as allowing *sweet* to function as an adjective agreeing with 'love-suit' and perhaps too as an adverb (*OED* B 1) with 'fulfil'.

5 **fulfil** fill up; fill full. Q spells it 'fullfill' in l. 4 but not here.
treasure (a) treasury (*OED* 3; *Lucrece* l. 16); (b) vagina

6 **my will one** (a) my will alone; (b) and my will being one of the many who are allowed to fill up your treasury of love

7 **of great receipt** with a great capacity (*OED* s.v. 'receipt' 15a). The argument here is that 'your sexual organs are like a large exchequer or treasure chest in which a single thing is not worth counting; therefore let me in without telling anyone or counting me as part of the tally'.
prove demonstrate, i.e. give practical illustration of the abstract mathematical principle that 'one is no number' by seeing a single item vanish into a huge store.

8 **Among a number** (a) among all the numbers only one is not properly speaking a number; (b) among a large number of entities a single one does not matter. That 'One is no number' is proverbial (Dent O52, 54), as in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* l. 255 and *8*.14 n.

9 **untold** (a) uncounted; (b) unrecorded (as a secret)

10 **Though . . . be** although I must be considered as part of your complete tally. *Account* may pun on 'cunt'.

11 **hold . . . hold** consider . . . physically grasp me
so provided that

12 **That nothing . . . thee** regard that inconsiderable thing that I am as sweet. *Hold* and *something sweet* all carry an erotic charge.

14 **my name is Will** So it was, of course. Here, though, the poem approaches a popular riddle cited by Kerrigan, and blurs into anonymous ribaldry: 'My lover's will | I am content to fulfill; | Within this rhyme his name is framed; | Tell me then how he is named?' Will I am (William) is the answer.

136

If thy soul check thee that I come so near,
Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy Will,
And will, thy soul knows, is admitted there:
Thus far for love my love-suit sweet fulfil.
Will will fulfil the treasure of thy love,
Ay, fill it full with wills, and my will one.
In things of great receipt with ease we prove
Among a number one is reckoned none;
Then in the number let me pass untold,
Though in thy store's account I one must be;
For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold
That nothing me, a something sweet to thee.
Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
And then thou lov'st me for my name is Will.

2 Will] Q (*Will; also italicized in 5 and 14*) 6 Ay] Q (I) 12 nothing me] Q; Nothing-me GILDON; no-thing me INGRAM AND REDPATH something sweet] Q (some-thing sweet); some-thing (sweet) *conj.* Capell; some-thing, sweet, INGRAM AND REDPATH 14 lov'st] SEWELL; louest Q

1 **love** Q's 'Thou blinde foole loue' is often modernized as 'Thou blind fool, Love', which makes the addressee unequivocally the blind Cupid. Love is proverbially blind (Dent L506).

3 **lies** The context of deception adds 'deceives' to 'lives'.

4 **Yet what . . . be** Rhetoric was believed to be able to make the worst seem the better course, although passion is proverbially able to make us 'know and see what is better, and yet follow the worse', as Ovid's Medea puts it (Golding 7.24–5): 'Love persuades me one, another thing my skill. | The best I see and like: the worst I follow headlong still'.

5 **corrupt** (*ppl. a.*) contaminated; and, for a moment, a transitive verb

6 **anchored . . . ride** Anchorage can accompany bawdy elsewhere, as in Cleopatra's 'There would he anchor his aspect, and die | With looking on his life' (*Antony* 1.5.33–4). Presumably this is because ships at anchor move up and down on the spot. *Ride* has its nautical sense (*80*.10) but *all men* gives it a bitterly sexual twist.

7 **Why of . . . hooks** It is not clear whose *eyes* are false and therefore forged into hooks (either anchors or hooks for fishing could be meant). Traditionally it would be the eyes of a seductive woman which would be like baited hooks (as in *FQ* 1.1.49: 'Lo there before his face his Lady is, | Vnder blake stole hyding her bayted hooke'); here it is also the distorted vision of the lover's own eyes, which are transformed into predators by the mistress.

9 **several plot** a separate, individually owned piece of land

10 **common place** a publicly owned area on which anyone might walk or graze their animals. By the later seventeenth century it could be used to refer to a common object of derision (*OED* 5b). It implies prostitution or at least promiscuity here.

12 **To put** in order to put. Compare the proverb 'To set a good face on a bad matter' (Dent F17).

13 **things right true** (a) matters which are indisputably the case; (b) 'chaste cunts' (as Kerrigan elegantly puts it). This is presented as an answer to the questions put in the sonnet, but merely restates their cause.

14 **And . . . transferred** and so they are transformed into this sickness of misjudgement. *Transferred* is unusual in the sense 'transformed' (it is not given this sense by *OED*, although is by Schmidt), and may also mean 'my affections are transferred to this (disease-giving) false woman'. *Plague* may suggest venereal disease.

137

Thou blind fool love, what dost thou to mine eyes
That they behold and see not what they see?
They know what beauty is, see where it lies,
Yet what the best is, take the worst to be.
If eyes corrupt by over-partial looks
Be anchored in the bay where all men ride,
Why of eyes' falsehood hast thou forgèd hooks,
Whereto the judgement of my heart is tied?
Why should my heart think that a several plot,
Which my heart knows the wide world's common place?
Or mine eyes seeing this, say this is not,
To put fair truth upon so foul a face?
In things right true my heart and eyes have erred,
And to this false plague are they now transferred.

11 this is not,] SEWELL; ~ ~ ~ ^ Q; '~ ~ ~' TUCKER

For an alternative version of this sonnet, see *P. Pilgrim*, Poem 1. A manuscript version, grouped with poems from *P. Pilgrim*, and probably ultimately deriving from that printed version, is in Folger MS V.a.339, fo. 197^{v}.

1 **made of truth** composed of fidelity
2 **lies** By l. 13 the sense 'sleeps around' emerges.
3 **That** so that
untutored 'Uneducated, untaught; simple, unsophisticated' (*OED*, which offers the dedication to *Lucrece* and *3 Henry VI (True Tragedy)* 5.5.32 as earliest citations).
4 **false subtleties** cunning deceptions. *False* also implies sexual infidelity (Schmidt, 6), as it does in *20*.4.
5 **vainly** unreasonably, without any effect. The sense 'With personal vanity; conceitedly' (*OED* 3) is emerging *c.*1600, but there is no clear Shakespearian parallel for such a usage (*All's Well* 5.3.122–4 plays on 'vanity' and 'vainly': 'My fore-past proofs . . . | Shall tax my fears of little vanity, | Having vainly feared too little.')
6 **my days are past their best** When the poem was first printed in 1599 Shakespeare was 35. 'Youth' has no fixed limit in the period, but according to many of the established divisions of the ages of man Shakespeare would still have counted as a youth by this date. See *7*.6 n. For ageing sonneteers, see *104*.3 n.
7 **Simply** (a) straightforwardly, artlessly; (b) unconditionally; (c) stupidly, like a simpleton (*OED* 5; although not otherwise used by Shakespeare in this sense)
8 **suppressed** (a) left unexpressed (*OED* 4); (b) kept secret (*OED* 3a)
9 **wherefore** why
unjust sexually unfaithful. The usage develops *OED* 2, 'Not upright or free from wrongdoing; faithless, dishonest', and is paralleled in *P. Pilgrim* 18.21, where it also rhymes with 'trust'.
11 **O, love's . . . trust** 'O the best dress for love is the appearance of mutual fidelity.' This answers the questions of the previous lines.
12 **age** personified: aged people
told (a) counted; (b) publicly revealed. Cf. *suppressed*, l. 8 above.
13 **lie** brings out the double meaning latent in l. 2.
14 **And in . . . be** And through our sins and weaknesses we are delightfully misled. *Faults* covers both the act of lying together (and with others) and their reluctance to perceive the truth. *Flattered* means both 'beguiled' and 'pleased'.

138

When my love swears that she is made of truth,
I do believe her though I know she lies,
That she might think me some untutored youth,
Unlearnèd in the world's false subtleties.
Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
Although she knows my days are past the best,
Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue.
On both sides thus is simple truth suppressed:
But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
And wherefore say not I that I am old?
O, love's best habit is in seeming trust,
And age in love loves not to have years told.
Therefore I lie with her, and she with me,
And in our faults by lies we flattered be.

4 Unlearnèd . . . subtleties] Q; Vnskilfull . . . forgeries O1 6 she . . . are] Q; I know my yeares be O1; I know my yeres are FOL9 7 Simply I] Q; I smiling, O1 8 On . . . suppressed] Q; Outfacing faults in Loue, with loues ill rest O1 9 she . . . unjust] Q; my Loue that she is young O1 11 habit is in seeming trust] Q; habit's in an soothing tongue O1; habit is a soothing tongue O2; habit is a smoothinge tongue FOL9 12 to have] O1; t'haue Q 13 I . . . she] Q; Ile lye with Loue, and Loue O1 14 And . . . flattered] Q (flattered *i.e. flatterèd*); Since that our faults in Loue thus smother'd be O1

1–2 **O call . . . heart** (a) Do not ask me to provide excuses for the harm which your unpleasantness causes me; (b) Do not expect me to provide excuses for the failing which you, through your inhumanity, are imputing to me. To *lay upon* can mean 'To impose (an injunction, penalty, tax); to bestow (a name) upon' (*OED* s.v. 'lay' 55), although these senses were archaic by 1590.

3 **Wound me . . . tongue** On first reading this might mean 'do not stab my heart with your steely eye', alluding to the convention of the mistress's eyes as sources of pain and rebuke. The couplet returns to the convention that mistresses can murder with a gaze. By l. 5 the chief sense emerges: 'do not wound me by revealing your feelings through glances of your eye, but tell me directly'.

4 **Use power with power . . . art** use the capacity you have to hurt with direct force, rather than in an underhand way. Cf. 94.1.

5 **in my sight** while I can see you

6 **forbear** restrain yourself from

7 **What need'st thou** why do you need to

8 **o'erpressed** overtaxed; overwhelmed

9–12 '**Ah . . . injuries**' Inverted commas are not used in Q to indicate speech. Q's 'Ah' followed by the defence of the mistress couched in the language of the orthodox besotted sonneteer would mark the lines as speech for early modern readers. What is lost in a modernization is the uncertainty as to when the direct speech ends. The couplet is usually (as here) set apart as a dry coda to the defence of the mistress; for an early reader it would not have been so clearly distinguished.

10 **pretty looks** (a) charming glances; (b) beautiful appearance

11 **my foes** i.e. her eyes

13 **Yet do not so** do not look at others, despite my efforts to justify your conduct

14 **rid** do away with. In other words, 'look at me and kill me with your eyes'. A desire for a quick death is frequent among sonneteers: as Sidney put it: 'A kind of grace it is to slay with speed', *Astrophil and Stella* 48.14.

139

O call not me to justify the wrong
That thy unkindness lays upon my heart:
Wound me not with thine eye but with thy tongue,
Use power with power, and slay me not by art.
Tell me thou lov'st elsewhere; but in my sight,
Dear heart, forbear to glance thine eye aside.
What need'st thou wound with cunning when thy might
Is more than my o'erpressed defence can bide?
Let me excuse thee: 'Ah, my love well knows
Her pretty looks have been mine enemies,
And therefore from my face she turns my foes,
That they elsewhere might dart their injuries.'
  Yet do not so, but since I am near slain,
  Kill me outright with looks, and rid my pain.

9–12 'Ah, . . . injuries.'] TUCKER; ^ah . . . iniuries:^ Q 13 near] Q (neere)

1 **press** subject to pressure. *Tongue-tied* adds an extra element to her cruelty: criminals who refused to plead (especially when charged with treason) could be subjected to *peine forte et dure*: 'Such felons as stand mute and speak not at their arraignment are pressed to death by huge weights laid upon a board that lieth over their breast and a sharp stone under their backs', Harrison, 191. In such a setting even the innocent 'ex*press*', l. 3, acquires a painful suggestion of imposed suffering.

4 **pity-wanting** both lacking and needing pity

5 **wit** common sense, sometimes tending to 'sharpness, canniness' in the period

6 **Though . . . so** to tell me that you love me even though you do not

7 **testy** irritable, querulous; often with a slight suggestion of deficiency in the testy person. Shakespeare uses the word of children (as in *Lucrece* l. 1094) and fools (*Coriolanus* 2.1.43).

11 **ill-wresting** prone to interpret in the worst possible sense (the only instance in *OED*)

13 **so** i.e. a mad slanderer; possibly also 'believed'
belied be slandered

14 **Bear . . . wide** The general sense is 'look honest even if you are not'. A metaphor from archery underlies *straight* and *go wide*: 'Direct your gaze towards the target (me), even though your heart shoots past me to another object'. To *go wide* can mean 'to miss the point of a remark', hence here the association with gently humouring the poet while her thoughts are on another subject.

140

Be wise as thou art cruel; do not press
My tongue-tied patience with too much disdain,
Lest sorrow lend me words, and words express
The manner of my pity-wanting pain.
If I might teach thee wit, better it were,
Though not to love, yet, love, to tell me so,
As testy sick men, when their deaths be near,
No news but health from their physicians know.
For if I should despair I should grow mad,
And in my madness might speak ill of thee.
Now this ill-wresting world is grown so bad,
Mad slanderers by mad ears believèd be.
That I may not be so, nor thou belied,
Bear thine eyes straight, though thy proud heart go wide.

6 yet, love,] MALONE; yet loue Q; yet (love) *conj.* Capell 11 Now] Q; Know *conj.* G. B. Evans 13 belied] GILDON; be lyde Q; be-lide BENSON

The sonnet takes as its structural device a combination of the *gradus amoris*, in which sight of the beloved is followed by hearing her, then touching her, and the idea of a 'banquet of sense' by which a lover feasts each of his senses in turn on the beloved. See *Venus* ll. 433–50 and n.

1 **In faith** truly, indeed

2 **errors** (a) physical defects; also (b) mistakes (such as her reluctance to recognize that the poet is old in *138*); (c) sins; (d) wanderings (often with an association of licentiousness)

3 **they** the eyes

4 **in despite of view** (a) despite what it sees; (b) in contempt of mere sight (chiming on *despise*). *View* is quite often used in the poems and Sonnets in *OED* sense 4: 'The exercise of the faculty of sight; the faculty or power of vision', as in *27*.10, *148*.11.

5 **thy tongue's tune** the sound of your voice; not necessarily implying melodiousness, as Coriolanus's gruff words to the plebs reveal: 'if it may stand with the tune of your voices that I may be consul' (2.3.85–6), although counter-examples include Cymbeline's rapt 'The tune of Innogen', *Cymbeline* 5.6.240, and *8*.1.

6 **base touches** (a) ignoble physical contact (possibly sexual, as in *OED* 1b and *Measure* 5.1.140–1: 'Who is as free from touch or soil with her | As she from one ungot'); (b) deep musical sounds (*OED* s.v. 'touch' 8 *Mus.* 'The act or manner of touching or handling a musical instrument, so as to bring out its tones'; cf. *Merchant* 5.1.67–8: 'With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear, | And draw her home with music').

8 **sensual feast** The 'banquet of sense' is a literary topos which dwells on the delights afforded each sense in turn by the inviting prospect of a mistress. Ben Jonson's *Poetaster* 4.5.192–9 is representative: 'To celebrate this feast of sense, | As free from scandal, as offence. | Here is beauty, for the eye; | For the ear, sweet melody; | Ambrosiac odours, for the smell; | Delicious nectar for the taste; | For the touch, a lady's waist; | Which doth all the rest excel'. Shakespeare explores the topos in *Timon* 1.2.122–4: 'Th' ear, | Taste, touch, smell, all, pleased from thy table rise'. It is typical of the programmatic unconventionality of the sonnets to the mistress that this poem rejects the convention whilst exploiting it, and, through the pun on *touches* above, blurs the neat divisions of the traditional banquet in synaesthetic delight.

9 **five wits** are traditional subdivisions of the inner mental faculties, which correspond to the five outer senses: they are sometimes reckoned to be common sense, imagination, fantasy, right estimation, memory. The broadly Augustinian account in *Batman upon Bartholomew* (1582), fo. 13$^{r–v}$ is closer to Shakespeare's faculty psychology elsewhere, and lists the inner wits as feeling (by means of which the soul 'taketh heed to the bodily wits'), wit (the power of the soul to know corporeal things), imagination ('whereby the soul beholdeth the likeness of bodily things when they be absent'), reason (which adjudicates between good and bad), and intellect (which is the power to understand intellectual and material entities, such as God and his angels).

11–12 **Who leaves . . . to be** 'who leaves uncontrolled the mere outward husk of a man in order to be your abject servant'. That is, the heart has abdicated its sovereignty over the body in order to become the slave of the mistress.

13 **Only** means both 'however' and 'to this extent and no further'.
plague suffering, sickness; often regarded as being inflicted by God, sometimes for a greater good

14 **awards** (a) imposes on me (usually used of judicial sentences); (b) is kind enough to grant me. Samuel Butler suggested that there is an allusion to purgatorial suffering here: the poet rejoices because he is reducing his pain in the afterlife by suffering it now. A simpler, masochistic, pleasure is at work, though: the poet rejoices that he suffers because he would rejoice in anything his mistress makes him do, and being made to suffer is a form of attention. There is also a jaunty 'who cares if I got VD? It was fun' struggling somewhere in there.

141

In faith I do not love thee with mine eyes,
For they in thee a thousand errors note,
But 'tis my heart that loves what they despise,
Who in despite of view is pleased to dote.
Nor are mine ears with thy tongue's tune delighted,
Nor tender feeling to base touches prone,
Nor taste, nor smell, desire to be invited
To any sensual feast with thee alone;
But my five wits nor my five senses can
Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee,
Who leaves unswayed the likeness of a man,
Thy proud heart's slave and vassal wretch to be.
  Only my plague thus far I count my gain:
  That she that makes me sin awards me pain.

1 **dear virtue hate** (a) your valued chastity amounts to no more than hatred (of my love); (b) your most prized inner quality is hatred. A compliment to the mistress's chaste resistance to love is almost entirely obscured because of the completion of the clause and the line with 'hate'.

2 **grounded on** built upon. See *62*.4 and n. It is left carefully uncertain as to whether *grounded on* agrees with *my sin* or the mistress's *hate*. Both are founded on adulterous love.

3 **but** only

6 **scarlet ornaments** lips. *Scarlet* has strong pejorative associations through the 'scarlet woman' described in Revelation 17–19, who was frequently linked with Catholicism, sexual infidelity, and with misleading the faithful, as in *FQ* 1.8.6. These associations are activated by *profaned*.

7 **sealed false bonds** (a) attached (red wax) seals to testaments of adultery; (b) consummated treacherous liaisons (with kisses)

8 **Robbed . . . rents** by adultery you have stolen the dues of marriage (and robbed others of the children which are the productive yield of their marriage). Beds are presented as estates, or *revenues* (accented on the second syllable), 'The collective items or amounts which constitute an income' (*OED* 4) which yield *rents*, or the payments by tenants. The imagery recalls the sonnets to the friend, which associate good stewardship of an estate, due returns from investments, and procreation.

9 **Be it lawful** Let it be lawful; uttered with some confidence, since the phrase fuses together two formulae widely used in Tudor statutes: 'it shall be lawful' and 'be it enacted'. *Be it* is monosyllabic.

10 **Whom . . . thee** at whom you are gazing amorously even now, while I am beseeching you. Compare the rolling gaze of *139*.

12 **pity** On the association of pity with yielding sexual favours, see *132*.4 n.

13 **what thou dost hide** i.e. pity

14 **By self . . . denied** you can be refused pity simply on the basis of the example which you yourself are setting. That is, if you want to be pitied, you must pity me.

142

Love is my sin, and thy dear virtue hate,
Hate of my sin, grounded on sinful loving.
O, but with mine compare thou thine own state,
And thou shalt find it merits not reproving,
Or if it do, not from those lips of thine
That have profaned their scarlet ornaments
And sealed false bonds of love as oft as mine,
Robbed others' beds' revenues of their rents.
Be it lawful I love thee as thou lov'st those,
Whom thine eyes woo as mine importune thee.
Root pity in thy heart, that, when it grows
Thy pity may deserve to pitied be.
If thou dost seek to have what thou dost hide,
By self example mayst thou be denied.

8 beds' revenues'] Q (*beds*^ *reuenues*^)

1 **careful** (a) attentive; (b) full of care, anxiety
housewife was pronounced 'hussif'.
2 **One of her feathered creatures** evidently a chicken, but also perhaps, as Kerrigan suggests, an Elizabethan fop in feathers. Feathered hats were voguish in the 1590s.
4 **pursuit** is accented on the first syllable.
5 **holds her in chase** runs after her. A set phrase listed under *OED* 'chase' 1e, and used in *Coriolanus* 1.7.18–19: 'Spies of the Volsces | Held me in chase'.
6 **bent** directed
7 **flies before her face** flees just ahead of her, with a play on flying, which is what the chicken tries to do. The phrase suggests wilful opposition through the phrase 'to fly in the face of', meaning 'openly to oppose' (the phrase is first cited in *OED*, s.v. 'face' 4b, from Thomas Wilson's *Art of Rhetoric*, a work which Shakespeare knew well).
8 **prizing** caring about
10 **thy babe** The comparison of an impotent lover to a baby who is unable to influence his nurse or mother is also used by Fulke Greville, *Caelica* 43.13–14 ('I, like the child, whom Nurse hath overthrown, | Not crying, yet am whipped, if you be known') and 61.5–10.
11 **thy hope** the thing which you are hoping for
13–14 **So will . . . still** 'So I will pray that you will have what you desire (which is a man called Will) if you turn back to me and calm my loud crying.' What she desires, the other lovers whom she pursues, will of course be lost if she stops her pursuit and returns to the poet called Will. It was proverbial that 'Women must have their wills while they live because they make none when they die' (Tilley W715), and, more simply, 'Women will have their wills' (Dent W723).

143

Lo, as a careful housewife runs to catch
One of her feathered creatures broke away,
Sets down her babe and makes all swift dispatch
In pursuit of the thing she would have stay,
Whilst her neglected child holds her in chase,
Cries to catch her whose busy care is bent
To follow that which flies before her face,
Not prizing her poor infant's discontent;
So runn'st thou after that which flies from thee,
Whilst I, thy babe, chase thee afar behind.
But if thou catch thy hope, turn back to me
And play the mother's part: kiss me, be kind.
So will I pray that thou mayst have thy Will,
If thou turn back and my loud crying still.

1 careful] Q (carefull); care-full OXFORD 2 feathered] LINTOT (fether'd); fethered (*i.e. featherèd*) Q 13 Will] Q (*Will*)

For an alternative version of this sonnet, see *P. Pilgrim*, Poem 2.

1 **Two loves** both 'two kinds of love' and 'two lovers'

2 **suggest** 'To prompt (a person) to evil; to tempt *to* or *to do* something; to seduce or tempt away' (*OED* 2a). The verb is often used of the devil, as in *Merry Wives* 3.3.205: 'what devil suggests this imagination?'

3 **right fair** (a) very beautiful; (b) of a very fair complexion

4 **coloured ill** dark, with a suggestion of evil. The idea that one had a good and a bad angel who argued over one's soul is common in the drama of the period, as in *Dr Faustus* (A Text) 2.3.12 ff. Drayton's *Idea* (1599) 22 provides an analogue in the sonnet tradition. The convention here is transformed into a seduction and corruption of one angel by the other.

5 **hell** The slang sense 'vagina' runs through the poem.

6 **side** Q's 'sight' is probably a compositorial error, although it could mark the survival of an earlier draft.

7 **saint** good angel. Unusual in this sense (although see *OED* 3b and the King James Bible, Jude 14: 'The Lord cometh with ten thousands of his Saints'), and probably resorted to because 'angel' is unmetrical and the monosyllabic 'spirit' has already been used indifferently of both loves.

9 **whether that** whether or not

10 **directly** (a) 'Completely, absolutely, entirely, exactly, precisely' (*OED* 4); (b) 'Immediately (in time); straightway; at once' (*OED* 6a)

11 **from me** away from me

14 **fire my good one out** (a) blasts my good angel to hell (and so rejects him); (b) gives my good angel the flaming irritation of venereal disease; (c) blasts my friend's penis out of her 'hell'. Commentators have also suggested that there is an allusion to the practice of smoking foxes from their holes. It is hard to see how this would help the poet to know whether or not his friends are sleeping together. Compare the proverb 'One fire drives out another' (Dent F277).

144

Two loves I have, of comfort and despair,
Which like two spirits do suggest me still.
The better angel is a man right fair;
The worser spirit a woman coloured ill.
To win me soon to hell my female evil
Tempteth my better angel from my side,
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,
Wooing his purity with her foul pride.
And whether that my angel be turned fiend
Suspect I may, yet not directly tell,
But being both from me, both to each friend,
I guess one angel in another's hell.
    Yet this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt,
    Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

2 Which] Q; That O1 suggest] Q (sugiest) 3, 4 The] Q; My O1 6 side] O1; sight Q 8 foul] Q; faire O1 9 fiend] Q (finde) 11 But . . . from] Q; For . . . to O1 13 Yet . . . ne'er] Q; The truth I shall not O1

The octosyllabic form of this poem combined with the surface simplicity of its wordplay has led many to believe that it is early work. See Andrew Gurr, 'Shakespeare's First Poem: Sonnet 145', *Essays in Criticism* 21 (1971), 221–6. 'Hate away' in l. 13 may be a pun on 'Hathaway', the surname of Shakespeare's wife, whom he married in 1582 when she was already pregnant. She was 26 and he was 18.

2 **'I hate'** Inverted commas are editorial throughout

3 **for her sake** because of her

5 **Straight** immediately

6–7 **that ever sweet . . . doom** which, always mild in sound and tone, was used to give a mild sentence

8 **And taught it . . . greet** her heart decides to greet me in a different way

10–11 Compare the proverb 'After night comes the day' (Dent N164).

11–12 **fiend . . . heaven . . . hell** Although this poem is likely to be very early work, these terms all link it with the previous sonnet.

13 **'I hate' . . . threw** She tore the words 'I hate' away from meaning that she hated me (by adding 'not you' to them).

145

Those lips that love's own hand did make
Breathed forth the sound that said 'I hate'
To me that languished for her sake;
But when she saw my woeful state,
Straight in her heart did mercy come,
Chiding that tongue, that ever sweet
Was used in giving gentle doom,
And taught it thus anew to greet:
'I hate' she altered with an end
That followed it as gentle day
Doth follow night, who, like a fiend,
From heaven to hell is flown away.
'I hate' from hate away she threw
And saved my life, saying 'not you.'

2, 9, 13 'I hate'] MALONE (*italic*; *conj.* Capell); ^~ ~^ Q 14 'Not you.'] MALONE (*italic*); ^~ ~.^ Q

Sonnets which explored a dialogue between soul and body were not uncommon. See e.g. Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella* (first printed 1591), 110 ('Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust | And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things'), and Bartholomew Griffin, *Fidessa* (1596), 28: 'Well may my soul, immortal and divine, | That is imprisoned in a lump of clay, | Breathe out laments, until this body pine, | That from her takes her pleasures all away'. As Vendler notes, however, 'The gloominess of this sonnet has little of the radiance of Christian hope'.

1 **centre** the central, animating principle. The suggestion that the soul is imprisoned by its position is developed in the lines that follow.

2 **Spoiled by** Q's repetition of 'My sinful earth' is hypermetrical and not readily intelligible, since the singular 'sinful earth' becomes a plural *rebel powers*. The compositor appears to have repeated the last three words of the previous line. There is also a possibility that the copy was incomplete or partially revised at this stage of the sequence. The poem comes after a very early work, and in the last but one sonnet, *144*.6, there is a misreading of a rhyme word which could indicate illegible or partially revised copy. Most modern editors simply omit the first three syllables of l. 2 and replace them with square brackets. Emendation is necessarily pure conjecture based on Shakespearian usage elsewhere (see collation). The main alternatives are that the *rebel powers* trick or deceive the soul, hence Malone's 'Fool'd' and Seymour-Smith's 'Gull'd'; or that they attack, control, or otherwise seek to diminish its autonomy, hence B. G. Kinnear's 'thrall to', which has an analogue in *Lucrece* ll. 719–26. Vendler's reading (after Sebastian Evans's conjecture) 'Feeding' merits serious consideration since it contributes (perhaps excessively) to wordplay later in the poem. The central conceit of the poem is that the soul is arrayed by (i.e. 'dressed in'; the possible sense 'to raise in arms' is not elsewhere used by Shakespeare) outer walls (the senses and bodily appetites) which are rebellious to it in that their sensuous ornamentation enmires the soul in mortality. As the soul pines within, like a captive in a siege, it is likely that whatever the poet wrote in l. 2 anticipated this image. 'Sieged by' is one possibility, but *Spoiled* combines the sense of aggressive attack (*OED* 1a: 'Pillaged, plundered; ravaged') with a diminution in the soul's resources. The word is also associated by Shakespeare with mortality (Cassio's 'O I am spoiled', *Othello* 5.1.55), and when sexual purity has been sullied, as it is in *Lucrece* ll. 1170–3, the closest analogue for this passage. *Spoiled* also suits the concern of the poem with outer garments of doubtful value, via the sense 'to damage, mar or mark' (see Schmidt, 3 and *Troilus* 2.2.68–9: 'We turn not back the silks upon the merchant | When we have spoiled them' (although Q reads 'soiled')). See Wells, 'New Readings' (see *12.4* n.), 318–19.

3 **pine** starve

5 **short a lease** There is no point in expensively decorating a lodging which one is only entitled to occupy for a short period. Compare the proverb 'No man has lease of his life' (Dent M327). Christopher Sutton, *Disce Mori: Learn to Die* (1600), 75, uses a similar image: 'we are but tenants at will in this clay farm . . . howsoever we piece and patch this poor cottage, it will at last fall into the Lord's hands'.

6 **fading mansion** increasingly decrepit body. Cf. 2 Corinthians 5: 1: 'For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be destroyed, we have a building given of God, that is, an house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens'.

8 **charge** (a) expense; (b) what has been entrusted to you; perhaps also (c) *OED* 8 *fig.* a, 'A burden, load, weight (of trouble, inconvenience, etc.)'

9 **live . . . loss** reverses the predatory relationship with which the poem started: now the soul is exhorted to live upon its subordinates.

10 **that** the body
aggravate as usually in Shakespeare 'augment, increase' (*OED* 5). The sinister sense 'Of things evil: To increase the gravity of' (*OED* 6a) may be in play, suggesting that a material supply (*store*) can only get worse for getting bigger, as it increases the burden on the soul.

11 **Buy terms divine** (a) purchase long periods (as against a short, mortal *lease*); (b) secure favourable terms from God (by sacrificing hours previously devoted to the decking of the body)
hours of dross hours which are worthless. Cf. Matthew 6: 20: 'But lay up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where neither

146

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
Spoiled by these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more.
So shall thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

2 Spoiled by these] This edition (*conj*. Spence); My sinfull earth Q; Fool'd by those MALONE; Starv'd by the *conj*. Steevens in Malone; Hemmed with these *conj*. Furnivall; Gull'd by these SEYMOUR-SMITH; Feeding these VENDLER (*conj*. Sebastian Evans in Cambridge 1893); Seiged by these *conj*. This edition.

the moth nor canker corrupteth, and where thieves neither dig through, nor steal'.

12 **rich** gorgeous, richly attired

14 **And Death . . . then** Cf. two biblical passages included in the service for the Burial of the Dead: 1 Corinthians 15: 26: 'The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death', and 15.54: 'Death is swallowed up into victory'.

2 **longer nurseth** protracts (despite the expected sense 'helps to cure')
3 **ill** (a) disease; (b) evil
4 **uncertain** intermittent, difficult to please.
6 **prescriptions are not kept** professional recommendations are not followed
7 **desperate** two syllables
8 **Desire . . . except** that which my physician forbade me, Desire, is indeed deadly. Cf. Romans 8: 6: 'For the wisdom of the flesh is death: but the wisdom of the Spirit is life and peace'.
9 **Past cure . . . past care** Compare the proverb 'Past cure is past care' (Dent C921); here, though, Reason simply abdicates, leaving the poet sick beyond the power of medicine.
10 **frantic-mad** insanely active; as opposed to melancholy madness of sullen inactivity
evermore (a) continual; (b) continually increasing. Compare the proverb 'Desire has no rest' (Dent D211).
11 **discourse** my talk, conversation. Accented on the second syllable.
12 **At random . . . expressed** wandering insanely from the truth and ineffectually put
13 **bright** beautiful and of shining moral worth

147

My love is as a fever, longing still
For that which longer nurseth the disease,
Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,
Th' uncertain sickly appetite to please.
My reason, the physician to my love,
Angry that his prescriptions are not kept,
Hath left me, and I desperate now approve
Desire is death, which physic did except.
Past cure I am, now Reason is past care,
And, frantic-mad with evermore unrest,
My thoughts and my discourse as madmen's are,
At random from the truth vainly expressed.
For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.

1 **O me!** The exclamation mark is Q's.
love Q does not capitalize, but 'Love' (Cupid the blind god) is fleetingly evoked throughout this poem on the fallibility of love's sight.

2 **have no . . . true sight** (a) do not represent what is actually there; (b) bear no relation to accurate vision. *Sight* is both what is seen (*OED* 1) and the 'sense or power of vision' (*OED* 9a).

4 **censures** 'To form or give a "censure" or opinion of; to estimate, judge of, pass judgement on, criticize, judge' (*OED* 1). In Renaissance faculty psychology the judgement assessed the images presented it by the sight and formed an opinion of what objects they represented. The sense 'criticize adversely' is probably not meant.
falsely both 'inaccurately' and 'in a way that betrays'

6 **What means the world** for what reason does everyone else

7–8 **If it be . . . men's** 'If it is not the case that my mistress is fair, then love clearly proves that the vision of someone who is in love is not as accurate as the vision of the world.' *Denote* usually means to point out or designate with an outward visible sign; hence its usage here to mean 'gives public proof of'. Q punctuates 'If it be not, then loue doth well denote, | Loues eye is not so true as all mens: no', which prompts some editors to take 'no' as direct speech: 'Love's eye is not so true as all men's "no" '.

9 **true** (a) accurate; (b) faithful

10 **vexed** 'Of diseases, etc.: To afflict or distress physically; to affect with pain or suffering' (*OED* 2)
watching staying up late

11 **I** The first occurrence of the first-person pronoun brings out a subliminal pun on the falsity of the 'eye' and the internal divisions of the 'I'.

13 **love** Again 'Love' (Cupid the blind god) meets 'love' (the emotion) meets 'love' (the object of my affection).
with tears The primary sense is that love blurs the vision by making one cry, but since the addressee of the couplet is left uncertain there are other possibilities: if the mistress is addressed as 'love' (and the next line appears to turn on her), then her tears (of apparent repentance) could play their part in blinding the poet to what is really going on.

14 **thy foul faults** (a) your visible defects in beauty; (b) your disgusting vices

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O me! What eyes hath love put in my head,
Which have no correspondence with true sight,
Or if they have, where is my judgement fled
That censures falsely what they see aright?
If that be fair whereon my false eyes dote
What means the world to say it is not so?
If it be not, then love doth well denote
Love's eye is not so true as all men's: no,
How can it? O, how can love's eye be true
That is so vexed with watching and with tears?
No marvel then though I mistake my view:
The sun itself sees not till heaven clears.
O cunning love, with tears thou keep'st me blind,
Lest eyes well-seeing thy foul faults should find.

8 men's: no] Q; men's^ no DYCE 1857 (*conj.* Lettsom)

1 **O cruel** a traditional way of referring to the beloved in sonnet sequences, used here for the first time by Shakespeare. It brings to a climax the increasingly claustrophobic use of the conventional language of sonnet sequences. *Cruel* is used eight times in the sequence and five of those usages occur after *126*. The friend is never called *cruel* (except in *1*.8 where he is urged not to be cruel to himself), although time and age are (*60*.14, *63*.10). In the later part of the sequence cruelty is gradually focused on the mistress: first there is the general 'those whose beauties make them cruel' (*131*.2), then the mistress's eye is called cruel (*133*.5), then she is urged to 'be wise as thou art cruel' in *140*.1.

2 **with thee partake** 'To take part *with* a person, take sides', *OED*, citing this instance alone. Presumably it is the audible similarity of the word to 'part take' which prompts the usage. Elsewhere Shakespeare sometimes uses the word of intimate secret exchanges, as in 'thy bosom shall partake | The secrets of my heart', *Caesar* 2.1.304–5, and 'to your secrecy our mind partakes | Her private actions', *Pericles* Scene 1. 194–5. This might suggest a secondary sense 'When I am intimately close to you against my own interests'.

4 **myself, all tyrant for thy sake** Punctuation follows Q, making the poet become a surrogate tyrant for his mistress's sake. Some editors prefer to add a comma after 'all tyrant', making it a simple vocative. This is possible; but Q's compositors more usually omit a comma *before* a subordinate clause or a vocative rather than after it.

7 **lour'st** frown
spend vent (revenge is presented as a passion like anger). *Spend* can mean 'ejaculate' ('Spending his manly marrow in her arms', *All's Well* 2.3.278): its presence here at the end of the line and in close company with the reflexive *upon myself* and *moan* gives a strong undercurrent of self-mockery: 'I come even when you glare at me'.

9–12 **What merit . . . eyes?** 'What quality do I possess which is proud enough not to want to serve you? All my best qualities lose themselves in abject worship even of your very faults, ordered to do so by the proud glance of your eye.' This extreme of abjection is hard not to take with at least a trace of irony, especially since the sole quality attributed to the mistress is a *defect* (stressed on the second syllable).

13 **thy mind** what you think

14 **Those that . . . blind** You love those who can see (and taken in conjunction with the previous poem this might encompass 'see your faults'); I am not one of those, since I am blinded to your faults by my love. The general sense is that the mistress likes those who see her for what she is, and hates those who are blindly besotted with her.

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Canst thou, O cruel, say I love thee not
When I against myself with thee partake?
Do I not think on thee when I forgot
Am of myself, all tyrant for thy sake?
Who hateth thee that I do call my friend?
On whom frown'st thou that I do fawn upon?
Nay, if thou lour'st on me do I not spend
Revenge upon myself with present moan?
What merit do I in myself respect
That is so proud thy service to despise,
When all my best doth worship thy defect,
Commanded by the motion of thine eyes?
But, love, hate on, for now I know thy mind:
Those that can see, thou lov'st, and I am blind.

14 see, thou lov'st,] This edition; see^ thou lou'st, Q

1 **power . . . powerful** authority . . . strong; pronounced as Q spells them, 'powre' and 'powrefull' respectively.

2 **With insufficiency** through imperfection. *Insufficiency* is not elsewhere used by Shakespeare so it is hard to judge how negatively to take it.

3 **give the lie to** contradict; call a liar

4 **And swear . . . day** Because the mistress is dark, brightness ceases to be an ornament of beauty. Compare *28*.9–10.

5 **becoming of things ill** ability to make ugly (or wicked) things beautiful. Cf. Enobarbus on Cleopatra: 'vilest things | Become themselves in her', *Antony* 2.2.244–5.

6 **refuse of thy deeds** (a) in the meanest, least regarded of your actions (implying that there are other, nobler actions); (b) in the dregs that are your actions (implying that all her actions are such). *Refuse* as a noun, like *insufficiency*, is not elsewhere used by Shakespeare. The following line, with its mention of *warrantise of skill* (guarantee of good workmanship), suggests that *refuse* may correspond to 'seconds', or items of manufacture of poor quality which have been rejected for sale at full price. That sense appears to have been current in the seventeenth-century cloth industry.

11, 12 **abhor** a play on 'whore' or 'turn into a whore' seems likely, as in the name 'Abhorson' (the executioner and son of a whore in *Measure*) and in Desdemona's 'I cannot say "whore". | It does abhor me now I speak the word', *Othello* 4.2.165–6. This sense may be picked out by *with others* (by sleeping with others) in the next line.

13–14 **If . . . thee** 'The surface meaning is that in loving even the meanest in her his generosity deserves the return of her love for him; but beneath this there may well lie the harsh innuendo, playing on two senses of "worthy", that in loving someone so foul he shows himself a suitable person (because foul enough) to be loved by the foul one herself' (Ingram and Redpath).

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O, from what power hast thou this powerful might
With insufficiency my heart to sway,
To make me give the lie to my true sight,
And swear that brightness doth not grace the day?
Whence hast thou this becoming of things ill,
That in the very refuse of thy deeds
There is such strength and warrantize of skill
That in my mind thy worst all best exceeds?
Who taught thee how to make me love thee more,
The more I hear and see just cause of hate?
O, though I love what others do abhor,
With others thou shouldst not abhor my state.
If thy unworthiness raised love in me,
More worthy I to be beloved of thee.

1–2 **Love . . . love** again plays on the senses 'Cupid' (represented as a child) and 'the emotion of love'.

1, 2 **conscience** a sense of right and wrong. The French *con* or 'cunt' might be heard in the word, giving a quibble on 'carnal knowledge'. See Partridge, 84–5.

3 **urge not my amiss** do not charge me with wickedness

4 **Lest guilty . . . prove** in case you prove yourself to be guilty of the same crimes as me. The next line introduces a sophistical alternative, which seeks to blame the mistress for the poet's lust. Q reads 'least', which might give its readers a sense that the poet is seeking to exculpate the *gentle cheater*.

5–6 **For . . . treason** 'We two lovers are one: so when you betray me you are committing a double crime: first, you disloyally betray my faults to the world; secondly you commit treason against our joint state. You, the irrational part, are causing a rebellion against the reason, and are prompting the flesh to become uncontrollable.' *Betraying* may also mean 'when you are unfaithful to me with other men'.

8 **stays no farther reason** waits for no further excuse. The body, which has no conscience, is told by the soul that it has been victorious in love; the body carnally assumes that this means it should leap into sexual activity.

9 **rising at thy name** The penis is like a soldier who springs to attention at the mention of the mistress's name.

9 **point out thee** as a soldier chooses a particular opponent as his prize in battle. A 'point' or tip of the sword could mean the end of the penis (as in *L.L.L.* 5.2.276–7: 'Dumaine was at my service, and his sword: "*Non point*," quoth I'); so, 'fits you out with an erect prick'.

10 **pride** 'insurgent penis' (Partridge). For other usages which exploit this sexual sense, see 25.7.

11 **drudge** a contemptible slave of a lover

12 **To stand . . . side** 'to stand firm like an eager soldier and fight your cause, then to die at your side'. The primary sense is harder to paraphrase than the innuendo: *stand* is also used to mean 'have an erection' in the backchat between Speed and Lancelot in *Two Gentlemen* 2.5.20–4: 'when it stands well with him it stands well with her . . . My staff understands me.' *Fall* describes post-coital detumescence, and between standing and falling the mistress's loyal soldier of love 'dies', or has an orgasm.

13–14 **No want . . . fall** (a) so do not think that it is lack of a sense of duty that makes me call her 'love', since I, like a good soldier, die for her daily; (b) so it is not because I am a virgin who does not know about cunts that I call her 'love' (for me the word does not mean what it means to soppy innocents), for whose sake I regularly stiffen and detumesce

151

Love is too young to know what conscience is,
Yet who knows not conscience is born of love?
Then, gentle cheater, urge not my amiss,
Lest guilty of my faults thy sweet self prove.
For thou betraying me, I do betray
My nobler part to my gross body's treason.
My soul doth tell my body that he may
Triumph in love; flesh stays no farther reason,
But, rising at thy name, doth point out thee
As his triumphant prize. Proud of this pride,
He is contented thy poor drudge to be,
To stand in thy affairs, fall by thy side.
    No want of conscience hold it that I call
    Her 'love', for whose dear love I rise and fall.

4 lest] Q (least) 14 'love'] DYCE 1857; ^loue,^ Q

2 **twice forsworn . . . swearing** you break two vows in swearing love to me. What the two vows are has elicited much debate. The traditional explanation is a wedding vow and a vow of love made to the friend. The most probable explanation is the two kinds of vow described in the next two lines.

3–4 **In act . . . bearing** 'You broke your wedding vows by adultery, and you tore up your more recent commitment to a lover by swearing to hate where you formerly loved.' These are the two acts of being forsworn referred to in ll. 1–2. Q punctuates 'In act thy bed-vow broke and new faith torne, | In vowing new hate after new loue bearing'. The comma at the end of l. 3 would allow that the two breaches of faith are specified in each of the two lines: 'You are forsworn once in action by breaking your wedding vows and in breaking faith, and you are forsworn again in vowing, since you bear new hate after a recent love'. This is superficially tidy since it divides the two infidelities between the two lines, but does not make good sense: tearing up new faith could at a stretch be seen as an *act*, but not really as action which is equivalent to breaking a wedding vow by adultery; similarly it is hard to see how bearing hate can really be a breach *in vowing*. Hence the modification in Q's punctuation here.

3 **new faith torn** The image is of a contract being torn apart.

4 **new love bearing** (a) after experience of new love, after taking on a new lover; (b) after bearing the weight of a new lover (in bed). For this sense of *bear* see *Shrew* 2.1.200–1: '*Petruccio*: Women are made to bear, and so are you. *Katherine*: No such jade as you, if me you mean.'

5–6 Compare the proverb 'He finds fault with others and does worse himself' (Dent F107).

6 **perjured** forsworn

7 **but to misuse thee** 'To speak falsely of, to misrepresent' (*OED* 5, citing this passage alone); other senses of *misuse* are 'to maltreat' (*OED* 2); 'to violate or ravish' (*OED* 1b); 'To speak evil of; to abuse with words; to revile, deride' (*OED* 4); 'To deceive, delude' (*OED* 6). That is, the poet has made a score of vows that she is honest; since she is not true to him, he is forsworn in his oaths.

8 **All . . . lost** (a) all the simple faith that I had in you has left me; (b) all my capacity for honesty and truth to my word has vanished into you

9 **For I . . . kindness** The kind of oaths sworn have shifted from vows exchanged between lovers to declarations on oath as to the character of a person; hence *deep* on its first occurrence means 'utterly binding', almost 'religious'. On its second occurrence it means 'deep-seated' and has an edge of irony.

11 **enlighten** (a) give you light; (b) render you less dark (physically and morally)
gave eyes to blindness sacrificed my eyes to the blind (including presumably Cupid); made myself blind.

12 **made them . . . see** The eyes become coerced witnesses, forced to commit perjury. The perjuries alluded to in the poem hitherto at least have the virtue of being voluntary.

14 **more perjured eye** quibbles on 'eye' and 'I'. The poet concludes that the eye has committed the worst perjury of all, but the pun confesses his complicity.

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In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworn,
But thou art twice forsworn, to me love swearing:
In act thy bed-vow broke, and new faith torn
In vowing new hate after new love bearing.
But why of two oaths' breach do I accuse thee,
When I break twenty? I am perjured most,
For all my vows are oaths but to misuse thee,
And all my honest faith in thee is lost.
For I have sworn deep oaths of thy deep kindness,
Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy,
And to enlighten thee gave eyes to blindness,
Or made them swear against the thing they see.
For I have sworn thee fair: more perjured eye,
To swear against the truth so foul a lie.

13 eye] Q; I SEWELL 14 so] BENSON; fo Q

The relationship of *153* and *154* to the rest of the sequence is loose. Aetiological tales about the origins of wells are not unusual in sonnet sequences (in Giles Fletcher's *Licia* 27.10–12 the mistress makes a well into a source of health by bathing in it: 'She touched the water, and it burnt with love, | Now by her means, it purchased hath that bliss | Which all diseases quickly can remove'). A significant number of other sonnet sequences end with a similar shift in mood and genre: *Delia* (1592) bridges the gap between its sonnets and the *Complaint of Rosamond* by an Ode; Barnfield's *Cynthia* (1595) has an anacreontic ode between its sonnets and its concluding tale of Cassandra. Spenser's *Amoretti* (1595) are followed by a short group of poems known as 'Anacreontics' which precede the triumphs of the 'Epithalamion'. Sonnets *153* and *154* also follow ultimately a Greek form, the lines by Marianus Scholasticus in the Greek Anthology: 'Beneath these plane trees, detained by gentle slumber, Love slept, having put his torch in the care of the Nymphs; but the Nymphs said to one another "Why wait? Would that together with this we could quench the fire in the hearts of men." But the torch set fire even to the water, and with hot water thenceforth the Love-Nymphs fill the bath.' See James Hutton, 'Analogues of Shakespeare's Sonnets 153–4', *Modern Philology* 38 (1941), 385–403.

1 **brand** firebrand, or flaming torch, one of Cupid's traditional attributes. A Cupid bearing a firebrand is sometimes used to represent Platonic Love, who, in Achilles Bochius, *Symbolicarum quaestionem de universo genere* (Bologna, 1574), is presented as driving away the blind Cupid of corporeal passion. See Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, 2nd edn. (New York, 1962), 128. There may also be phallic overtones here.

2 **maid of Dian's** virginal attendant of the goddess Diana (goddess of chastity)
advantage 'a favourable occasion, an opportunity, a "chance" ' (*OED* 4)

3 **his** functions as both a masculine and neuter pronoun, agreeing with both Cupid and his *brand*.

4 **of that ground** in that vicinity

7 **grew** became. It was transformed into a hot bath of the kind used in the treatment of venereal diseases, as well as other ailments.
prove find by experience to be

8 **sovereign cure** a set phrase, 'Of remedies, etc.: Efficacious or potent in a superlative degree' (*OED* 3)

9 **new fired** relit

10 **The boy for trial needs would touch** Cupid, to test its potency, felt the need to touch. *Touch* can carry the sense 'infect' (Schmidt, 11b), as in *K. John* 5.7.1–2: 'The life of all his blood | Is touched corruptibly'.

11 **the help of bath** A few editors have imagined the poet setting off with his diseases to Bath to take the waters, ignoring the fact that sweating tubs must have been available in London.

12 **distempered** diseased (by the disruption to the temper of the four humours in the body)

153

Cupid laid by his brand and fell asleep.
A maid of Dian's this advantage found,
And his love-kindling fire did quickly steep
In a cold valley-fountain of that ground,
Which borrowed from this holy fire of love
A dateless lively heat, still to endure,
And grew a seething bath, which yet men prove
Against strange maladies a sovereign cure.
But at my mistress' eye love's brand new fired,
The boy for trial needs would touch my breast.
I, sick withal, the help of bath desired,
And thither hied, a sad distempered guest,
But found no cure; the bath for my help lies
Where Cupid got new fire: my mistress' eyes.

8 strange] Q (strang); strong TUCKER (*conj.* Tyler) 14 eyes] BENSON; eye Q

1 **Love-god** Cupid
5 **votary** one bound by vows (here by chastity). Not elsewhere used by Shakespeare of a female, for which he prefers 'votaress'.
6 **legions** a great number
7 **general of hot desire** the commander in chief of passion, i.e. Cupid
9 **quenchèd** put out, extinguished
11 **Growing** becoming
12 **thrall** 'One who is in bondage to a lord or master; a villein, serf, bondman, slave' (*OED* 1); a standard term for the abject sonneteer
13 **this by that I prove** I show the following maxim to be true as a result of my experience
14 **Love's fire . . . love** 'Cupid's brand can heat up water, but the waters to which I resorted cannot cool my love' (nor can they perhaps cure his feverish disease). The dainty classicism and sexually experienced bitterness of this poem are qualified by its concluding allusion to Song of Solomon 8: 6–7: 'for love is as strong as death: jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are fiery coals, and a vehement flame. Much water cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man should give all the substance of his house for love, they would greatly contemn it.'

154

The little Love-god lying once asleep
Laid by his side his heart-inflaming brand,
Whilst many nymphs, that vowed chaste life to keep,
Came tripping by; but in her maiden hand
The fairest votary took up that fire,
Which many legions of true hearts had warmed,
And so the general of hot desire
Was, sleeping, by a virgin hand disarmed.
This brand she quenchèd in a cool well by,
Which from love's fire took heat perpetual,
Growing a bath and healthful remedy
For men diseased; but I, my mistress' thrall,
    Came there for cure, and this by that I prove:
    Love's fire heats water; water cools not love.

'Spes Altera' (Manuscript version of 2). The variants between this and the text in Q may indicate that this is an early version. See Mary Hobbs, 'Shakespeare's Sonnet 2: "A Sugred Sonnet"?', *NQ* 224 (1979), 112–13 and Gary Taylor, 'Some Manuscripts of Shakespeare's Sonnets', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 68 (1985–6), 210–46, and Introduction, pp. 106–7. It is closer to the source text in Wilson: *pretty* in l. 10 and *new born* in l. 13 may echo Wilson, 56, 'you shall have a pretty little boy, running up and down your house, such a one as shall express your look, and your wife's look . . . by whom you shall seem to be new born'. This is the strongest argument that the poem reflects an early draft, but neither of those readings are found in BL3, nor in BL4 from which it was transcribed. As the late Jeremy Maule showed in unpublished research, the majority of the MS witnesses derive from Westminster Abbey MS 41 (control text here). There are several features which suggest that the process of scribal transmission flattened the text (e.g. *rotten* for Q's 'tattered', 'all-eaten truth' for 'all-eating shame'). The repetition of *account* in ll. 11 and 3 may reflect a transcriber's memory that the poem contained financial language. It may be that the variants from Q derive from one scribally modified exemplar which was doing the rounds of Christ Church, Oxford, with which a number of the MSS have an association. If so this poem is an illustration of how the Sonnets were received rather than how they originated.

TITLE **'Spes Altera'** 'another hope'. The phrase alludes to Aeneas's son Ascanius (*Aen.* 12.168), who is described as 'another hope for Rome'. Taylor claims it is 'Shakespearean' ('Some Manuscripts', 236), but Shakespeare is otherwise not known to have given any lyric poem a title. Several poems in Benson's 1640 edition are given similar non-authorial Latin titles (Sonnet *62* is entitled 'Sat fuisse', and *61* 'Patiens Armatus').

Manuscript Version

[2]

Spes Altera

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow
And trench deep furrows in that lovely field,
Thy youth's fair liv'ry so accounted now
Shall be like rotten weeds of no worth held.
Then, being asked where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the lustre of thy youthful days,
To say 'within these hollow sunken eyes'
Were an all-eaten truth, and worthless praise.
O how much better were thy beauty's use
If thou couldst say 'This pretty child of mine
Saves my account and makes my old excuse',
Making his beauty by succession thine.
This were to be new born when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.

Title] BL1, BL3, BL4; Spes Altera A song FOL9; To one y^{t} would dye a Mayd BL5, BL6, FOL6, W, YALE2; A Lover to his Mistres NOTT.; The Benefitt of Mariage RO 2
1 forty] W, Q; threscore BL1; 40[?] BL5 winters] W; yeares RO 2 2 trench deep furrows] digge deep trenches Q trench] W; drench RO 2 field] W; cheeke BL3, BL4 3 youth's] W; youth BL6 fair] W; proud Q; fairer RO 2 liv'ry] W; field RO 2 accounted] W; gaz'd on Q; esteemed NOTT. 4 Shall be like rotten weeds] W; Will be a totter'd weed Q; like] W; like like BL6 weeds] W; cloaths FOL6 no] W; small Q 5 being asked] W *etc.*; if we aske BL3, BL4; askt RO 2 thy] W *etc.*; this BL4 6 Where] W, Q; Where's BL1, BL3, BL4, FOL9, NOTT. the] W, Q; that BL1 lustre] W; treasure Q youthful] W; lusty Q 7 these hollow sunken] W; thine owne deepe sunken Q these] W; those YALE2; *omitted* BL5 8 all-eaten truth] W all-eating shame Q; all beaten truth FOL6 worthless] W; thriftless Q praise] W etc.; pleasure BL6 9 O how much better were] W; How much more praise deseru'd Q O] W; *omitted* BL6 much] W; far YALE2; *omitted* B5 beauty's] W; bewtious YALE2 10 say] W; answer Q pretty] W; faire Q; little BL3, BL4 11 Saves my account] W; Shall sum my count Q; Saud my account YALE2 my] W; mine NOTT. makes my old] W; make my old Q; makes me old BL5; makes no old FOL6; yeilds mee an NOTT.; makes the old RO 2; makes not old YALE2 12 Making] W; Prooving Q 13 new born] W; new made Q; made young BL3, BL4